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* I remain, dear sir, yours faithfully,

J. W. NEIL.

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* April 21, 1894.

* M.R.B.N.A. (Royal British Nurses' Association).

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* Yours most truly,

ROBERT HUMPHREYS, Post Office, Barrasford.

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JULY 1894.

The Matchmaker.

Human life is nought but error.—SCHILLER.

BY L. B. WALFORD.

CHAPTER XXXV.

‘I’VE KNOWN A LASSIE MARRY FOR A PEAT-STACK.’

ON the rare occasions when John Souter dined at the castle his sisters always sat up till he came home, to hear his account.

They could have had this at their leisure in the morning, for though the factor was often out late on his rounds he rarely started early, and breakfast was with him the most leisurely meal of the day,—but Jean and Marianne could not wait for the morning.

They were simple old children who wanted to eat their cake off-hand, and having beguiled the time of their brother’s absence by eking out all the information they had previously been able to gather concerning the festivity—and supplementing it by conjectures and suppositions—they would be far too impatient about the time the reveller might be expected back, to think of going to bed and to sleep.

At ten o’clock they would trim the lamp and stir the fire afresh.

Summer though it was, fires were rarely dropped after dark either at the castle or the factor’s house; for however strong the sun might be in the daytime, the evenings were pretty sure to be sufficiently cool to make the kindling of a cheery blaze welcome to all.

Between ten and eleven a pretty close watch would be kept from the front door.

In the silence without an approaching step could be heard some way off; and again and again Marianne, who was the principal listener, would cry aloud, 'I hear him!' mistaking the tread of some wandering animal for that of her brother, before the sharp click of the little gate at the bottom of the garden, and its subsequent unmistakable clang, would make her run joyfully out with her, 'Eh, John, is that you?' which told for certain that the watch was at an end.

In their eagerness to hear John would scarcely be allowed to speak. Each sister would implore the other to 'Whisht,' and would declare that the tale would never be told, for all the interposition and importunities; and would herself demand of John, and clamour and interrupt John, until finally reduced to silence for very lack of breath and intensity of curiosity.

On the present occasion curiosity, which as a rule had thus to wait its turn, actually tied the good ladies' tongues from the first.

They had learned more beforehand about this dinner-party than they were in the habit of doing; it being one of Lady Carnoustie's precepts not to 'say too much to the Misses Soutter about such affairs, because although the Misses Soutter knew their place far too well to expect to be invited, still it would be hardly polite to dilate to them upon festivities in which they were to have no share.' The Misses Soutter had never been promoted to anything beyond a luncheon with the family.

The principle was just, but had Lady Carnoustie been more closely acquainted with the feelings of the two humble-minded women, she would have seen that she might have talked and let anyone else talk to any extent on the subject, not only without fear of giving offence, but with the absolute certainty of bestowing enjoyment. They would have rejoiced to have been taken into confidence as to arrangements and preparations, and desired nothing more.

'I wish you two were coming,' Penelope had said when informing her friends of the Ainslie dinner-party.

'Penelope! What an idea! What would two plain old bodies like us do at your grand dinner-party? We have never dined at the castle in our lives, even when there was nobody there, let alone when Lord and Lady Carnoustie had company!'

'But why shouldn't you? Mr. Soutter is coming.' This was wanting in tact, but neither speaker nor hearers felt it so.

'John goes as Lord Carnoustie's factor,' explained Miss Jean, with dignity. 'The factor always dines at the great house, my dear. It is understood. Our father used to dine regularly every few months at the duke's, and our mother was occasionally asked when they were quite by themselves, for the duke and duchess were so kind, and the duke liked to play a game of chess with our mother, and said he once, "I never have a better antagonist than Mrs. Soutter!"' Indeed, I have heard our mother say that he was no very great hand at chess for all he was a duke, and that sometimes she found it difficult to let him beat at just the right time; for though she would play him very even till near the end of the game, of course she never would have presumed to give him checkmate. He would not have liked that at all.'

'There! Your mother dined with the duke and duchess where your father was factor, so I don't see why you and Miss Marianne should not come with Mr. Soutter on Tuesday.'

'That's very nice of you, Penelope, and I'm sure we feel, both Marianne and me, that you would be glad to have us; but, my dear, we are not quite like our mother, nor yet is Lady Carnoustie just the kind of person the duchess was. The duchess was the freest-spoken, pleasantest-voiced creature. She used to pick us bairns out of the road and take us for a drive in her pony carriage if she caught sight of us as she went by, and we always ended at the sweetie shop. Not but what Lady Carnoustie is pleasant enough. I'm sure we have no reason to complain, nor yet has John, and I never can make out what people mean by saying she is proud and haughty, but it is not everybody who has the way of being free without being *overly*. Penelope, my dear,' Miss Jean stroked her young visitor's hand and looked fondly into her face, 'I think I know one person who has it.'

'Me, Miss Jean?'

'Aye, my dear, you.'

The next moment Penelope's arms were round her neck. 'You to say that to me! If it had not been for you—and Miss Marianne—I don't know what I should have done sometimes, I was so miserable here. I am not miserable now, but I am often dull, and sometimes things don't seem very real to me, and it is all a puzzle,' her hold relaxing and a cloud stealing over her young brow. 'Do you know what it is to feel like that? I want help, and yet I don't want it. I don't know what I want. It will come right in time, I suppose. But anyhow, I am always happy when I am here with you, and I thought that perhaps I should not be

very happy on Tuesday night, and that was partly why I wanted you to come. I hoped you had been asked.'

'My dear, we haven't clothes if we were ever so much asked.'

'I'm sure you have quite good enough clothes—'

'Deed and we have not, and Lady Carnoustie knows it. John had to get a dress suit as soon as ever he got the factor's situation ; but we just waited to see.'

'Oh, then, you did think there was a chance ?'

Miss Jean coughed discreetly.

'No, my dear, no ; not a chance to call a chance. To be sure, Marianne had learned cribbage, thinking it was easier than chess, and that Lord Carnoustie, having been in the army when he was a young man, would likely have been fond of cards ; but you see directly we came to the place, and got to know the sort of person Lady Carnoustie was, we saw Marianne might have spared her pains. Lady Carnoustie won't have a pack of cards in the house,—and very right too. Only Marianne was just a little disappointed, for she had been at some pains learning, and neither John nor I can play, so it was all to no good.'

'Perhaps Miss Marianne would teach me ?'

'There, now, Penelope, if that isn't like you ! Well, if she can remember, but I doubt she has forgotten. I know she used to get quite in a way with her "fifteen twos" as it was ! We can ask her, and see what she says.'

'And I'll tell you all about the dinner-party ; though, after all, it can't be very much of a dinner-party, you know. Only seven strangers—that is, the four Ainslies, Mr. Redwood and his friend, and Mr. Soutter. Then we are six in the house—that makes thirteen altogether. Oh, but I know we are not thirteen, for though Lady Carnoustie professes not to be superstitious, she has had the sense to stop short of thirteen. I *am* superstitious ; it would have frightened me to death. Stop ! I remember it is Dr. McWhinnock who is to save us. With Dr. McWhinnock we shall be fourteen in all, and fourteen will look few enough in that huge dining-room. Yet we are as much excited and there is as much steam put on at the old castle as though we were to be a dozen dozen !'

She had to tell all that she had seen and heard on every hand.

There was nothing mean in this. Penelope never ran off to her old friends with revelations which the Carnousties would have disliked her making. She merely regaled the well-pleased ears of the faithful couple with the simplest of odds and ends, with her

own surprise and delight over the family treasures of plate and china displayed by Ailsie, with the imposing grandeur of the unveiled drawing-room, and such trifling items. But, as we have said, it had all been hearkened to with ravenous appreciation, and when, on the afternoon which was to see the Ainslies arrive, there had been no appearance of the bright figure which the good spinsters had learned to expect so often of late, they had experienced a blank sensation of disappointment.

They had reckoned on Penelope's being over to tell them how the table looked.

Penelope had meant to go, moreover, but her spirits had flagged somewhat after a certain little incident, and she had not felt in the humour for questioning and cross-questioning.

Afterwards, as we know, the mood passed, and she was excited and talkative at the dinner-table, and fairly animated throughout the remainder of the evening.

Mr. Soutter had noted this, as in his quiet way he noticed a great deal for the benefit of his womankind at home. He was an attached brother, and as he no more than they felt affronted by their being excluded from Lady Carnoustie's invitation, he made it a rule to have as much to tell on his return from the castle as possible.

He would even studiously note the details of dress dear to the feminine heart; so that her ladyship's black velvet and point lace were as well known by repute to the good Jean and Marianne as were her daughters' blue silks, with low necks and short sleeves.

It was the family creed that Mina should still be dressed in white with a broad sash.

Miss Soutter had made Penelope describe her own Parisian costume, and had in her secret soul wondered if it would look well enough, girlish and innocent enough, beside Miss Mina's white muslin.

She now demanded, among the first items, that John should tell her how Penelope looked.

John took out his handkerchief and blew his nose.

'Not just her best, perhaps, John?'

The factor's eyes twinkled, and he put back his handkerchief.

'Did the——' but Marianne raised her hand to stay her sister. 'Whisht—whisht! Let the man speak. Speak out, John. We're all friends. Penelope was a thought dowdy? Not quite so dressy as she might have been? She was not to wear white, we know; and we thought it something of a pity——'

'Whisht--whisht! Let the man speak.' It was now Jean's turn. 'Be frank, John,' she adjured. 'Was she--was it--were you disappointed in Penelope, John?'

The crucial question had been put. With parted lips and bated breath, each devout adherent of the perchance outshone and overshadowed favourite waited for the verdict.

'Was I disappointed?' said John. Then he rubbed his knee, and his eyes seemed to kindle and shoot back into the past. 'Disappointed?' He lifted his hand and brought it down with a bang upon the table. 'No.' Then his mouth widened into a slow smile. 'Disappointed? That would have been a queer thing to be. That lassie——' then he shook his head, the smile continuing, and gazed into the fire as upon a fair retrospect. 'The bonniest thing that ever came to old Carnoustie Castle! Like a pearl she was—pure and glistening. Like a bit bairn—laughing and rosy blushing. Was I disappointed in Penelope, quotha? Faix, if I was, there were others that were not! Eh, it was a sight to see yon youngster, yon Ainslie lad! He fair loupit at her as a cock at a grosert!¹ And he's not a bad lad, ready with his tongue; civil; conversational. He came round and sat by me after the ladies had left; and says he, "Ah, Mr. Souter, if my father had had *you* to manage for him, we need never have left Robert's Tower." Says I, "I trust to see you back at Robert's Tower yet, Captain." He laughed at that, but I'm thinking he guessed what I meant. It would be the making of him.'

'What would?' The sisters were mystified.

'What? Oh, a marriage with a heiress. All the Ainslies want is money, and they are not *that* hard up either, they're not over head and ears; only a bittie under water for the time being. Mr. East could clear them by putting his hand in his pocket; and if Penelope——'

'Penelope!'

'Aye, Penelope. Amn't I telling you about Penelope? "Troth, if you had been there to-night you would have needed no telling! Mind you," as the sisters glanced at each other with amazement and something of perturbation in their countenances, 'mind you, you're not to go off at a tangent with this. It would never do to let on I had seen anything or told anything,—but as sure as I'm a living man, once that young soldier knows that Penelope's the woman to set him on his legs, he'll need no one to egg him on to the match.'

¹ Gooseberry.

'Do you mean that Penelope is—rich, brother?' Miss Jean spoke in a singularly subdued voice. 'Of course we know she is an only child—'

'The only child of a rich man usually is considered so,' replied John dryly.

'Yes, I suppose Mr. East is a rich man.' Miss Jean was still thoughtful and perturbed. 'But we thought—we fancied—Marianne and I—that there was someone else who had an eye upon Penelope—'

'Like enough! She will have plenty of eyes upon her.'

'Do you suppose Mr. Redwood knows about it? Do you suppose—'

'Redwood? Ha! I never thought of that,' interrupted her brother, in his turn surprised. 'Redwood knows, of course. All London people know about each other. And so he has been having a try, has he? He's a sharp fellow; but somehow it never struck me. To be sure I have not seen much of him. You have seen him and Penelope together oftener than I have.'

'And we thought, Marianne and I, that, especially of late, there was certainly *something*—but,' amended Miss Jean, with a troubled look, 'if it's her money Redwood is after—'

'I'm not saying that it is, but it looks like it. Let me see, did not he arrive in the place on the very same day that she did? Did they not travel by the same steamer? Did they not both come from London? It looks queer—monstrous queer—if there be nothing in it. I have been a gowk not to think of that before. But, to tell the truth, my thoughts went another way; it was Mina I had in my mind for Redwood, if I must out with it; though, mind ye—both of ye—not a word, not a whisper,' with uplifted hand; 'if either my lord or my lady caught wind that we had—'

'Deed, brother, an' they would be right. It would ill become us to be talking. But just among ourselves,' and drawing their chairs closer, the worthy trio discussed the subject far into the night.

'Well, we'll see what we'll see,' concluded John, rising at last with a prolonged yawn. 'I'm for my bed, now. If you get a chance, just drop a word—it will need be a gey careful word, for she's as sharp as a needle, yon lassie is—into Penelope's ear. Crack up the Ainslies; they're decent folks; and the estates have passed from father to son for six generations. She would be "My Lady," too; and the Carnousties would be pleased to link on again with that stock. There has been no marriage between them for a while

back. It would be a very suitable alliance—a very—suitable—reasonable alliance. Penelope's father would think we had done well by his daughter; and the best of it is, the youngster hardly knew her name, let alone her heiress-ship, when he set to work. He was struck all of a heap by her looks. And she did look a pretty creature—a pretty creature,' relapsing into a note of tender admiration. 'I wondered little at Ainslie. I would have wondered at no man. Lord! what a difference dress makes! Penelope now—I never thought anything of Penelope till to-night, except, maybe, that she was a bit cheery thing. But as for Redwood, I hold to my opinion. He's off, if he ever was on. He has had his answer, whether in words or not. A nod's as good as a wink to a blind man. Lassies know how to make themselves understood. Penelope had not a word for Redwood to-night; and now that I think of it, he looked as glum as a hearse horse,—though what it was about I had not the wit to discover. I never thought of Penelope; but looking back, it's as clear as day to me. He's not like to be after Mina, then? Well, well; I would have liked the poor girl to have had *someone* after her; it's but natural at her age; and I can't but think a little more visiting and society is cheerful for young folks; but, to be sure, Lord and Lady Carnoustie must know their own business. Well, well; it's all for the best, I dare say. They're not a marrying race, the Carnousties. And if they are satisfied, no one else has any call to complain. But don't you let Penelope go and throw herself away upon this Redwood, come from no one knows where! An Englishman! a Londoner—a mere nobody! when she might marry into the Ainslies! Just you tell her about Robert's Tower, and all the beautiful woods and streams. The best salmon fishing in Ayrshire——'

'Preserve us, John! A lassie doesn't marry for salmon fishing.'

'I've known a lassie marry for a peat-stack. Don't you forget the salmon fishing when you are talking of the Ainslie property. It's an item; and every item tells. Trust me, Penelope's not such a fool as to "lichtlie" a good salmon river. She's pleased enough with the young fellow as it is; and with judicious handling we may have it a match before we know where we are.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

' DID YOU NOTICE MR. REDWOOD'S FACE ? '

POOR Lady Ainslie, whom Nature had never designed for a schemer, had by sheer force of circumstances been turned of recent years into one.

Could she have gone on and on living her shallow easy life at Robert's Tower, entertaining and being entertained, dispensing hospitality and amiability to all within her reach, she would never have worried herself over any subject whatever, nor perhaps would there ever have appeared those 'tittle lines which were now drawn about the corners of her mouth.

But it is hard to be not only from hand to mouth oneself, but to have children—grown-up children—hanging upon one's decisions and one's purse ; turning up at every point, eager to know what is to be done for them, and with them,—questions for which there is no satisfactory answer, and which have already been pondered over in secret hours of trouble.

Captain Ainslie was not an only son : there were boys at Sandhurst ; there was a boy in Germany ; and there was another in India. All of these had to be provided for somehow, and every year the problem of providing became a more difficult one to solve. She had grown to dread the very letters that announced a holiday.

Like parents, like children ; naturally the offspring of a heedless, improvident couple were gay of heart, and inclined rather to believe in Fortune than to challenge her. As we have seen, Bob Ainslie did not at the present time even bestir himself sufficiently to obtain the invitations which his soul loved, preferring rather to drift along beneath the maternal wing, and take whatever came in his way.

' He will never do *anything* for himself ! ' she would now and then cry, when at her wits' end, distracted by the absence of even the most slender amount of practical sense on the part of the *insouciant* dandy and favourite. ' I am doing all I *can*, and more than I *like*, to find him amusement and house-room ; and he takes it as a matter of course, and will not even fall in with my views, until I have argued with him and persuaded him.'

She never appealed to Sir Robert ; Sir Robert would have bidden her cut Bob adrift on the instant. He had been peevishly averse to being saddled with his son from the first moment that

the tour of autumn visits was projected, and all his wife would have got from him, had she essayed now to complain or consult, would have been, 'I told you so, but you would not believe me. Send him about his business. Tell him we can't manage to take him along any further.'

Had she ventured upon, 'But he has nowhere to go, and he has not funds to keep himself at hotels or places of that kind,' she would have been met with, 'The more fool he! He ought to have thought of that, and made friends, and got invitations.' She might have talked for hours and she would have got no further.

It was perhaps this absence of sympathy and support from her husband in her hour of need, which told more upon the poor struggling woman than all besides. She would have done everything for her children; Sir Robert would do nothing. His own misfortunes and embarrassments had weakened whatever paternal affections he might once have had, and his one thought now was how to be as little encumbered by them, and hear as little about them as possible.

They must learn to do as others did. The world was full of other people's younger sons; and if *they* could make their way, so could his. He had never intended to bring them up to idleness; and, by George! they must work now, if they never did before; now, when he had not a roof to shelter himself, let alone them.

Some such outburst would be tolerably sure to follow the arrival of an epistle from Archie or Davie, announcing a month's or a fortnight's leave, and begging to know what was to be done with it. Lady Ainslie would be sitting by sighing, with the note in her hand. Sir Robert would be very cross with her—cross, as he had never been at Robert's Tower. He would demand to know what she wanted, and what she meant by those funereal sighs. She would own that she was wondering if the little cupboard near Alice's room could take in a bed, and hoping that perhaps the boy might be allowed to make use of his father's dressing-room.

At first Sir Robert would swear he should allow nothing of the kind; but ultimately a tacit consent would be wrung gloomily out of him, and the boisterous young cadet, to whom the whole thing was a good joke, would take possession not only of the cupboard and the dressing-room, but of every other nook in the lodgings; leave his things in every corner, turn everything upside down, wonder why nobody was jolly as they used to be at home, and finally end by being somewhat the reverse of jolly himself, and not at all sorry when his term of absence was expired.

Still, Sir Robert was more tolerant when it came to the point towards these jovial lads than towards his eldest son and heir.

He simply could not stand Bob. Bob's air of negligent well-being, his indifference to Fate, his contentment, above all, his calm habit of providing himself with the best of everything, and his being able to do so in spite of the cloud which hung over the family fortunes, was a constant exasperation. Sir Robert could not conceive how the thing was done.

He himself, with a sense of bitter degradation, had come to buying hats and coats from cheap tradesmen, and had reduced by one-half the number that used to be periodically sent him. He had cut down his county subscriptions. When in London he went about in omnibuses.

But Bob would dash up to the door in a hansom, and there was not a neater or a smarter-looking fellow to be seen in Pall Mall.

A growl from his father would invariably be turned aside with a laugh and a cheerful, 'All right, sir. I know what I'm about!' with which it was perhaps prudent to seem satisfied, lest interest and interference might have been misinterpreted.

'If he thinks he is going to get any help from me, beyond his allowance—it is as much as I can do to give him that!' Sir Robert would exclaim, when what he termed some 'ruinously expensive' article made its appearance; but he never could find out what his wife thought on the subject.

The truth was, as has been said, that by sheer dint of sorely won experience poor Lady Ainslie was learning to play another part in life than that for which she had been originally cast.

She was being taught silence, patience, and a certain kind of wisdom. No one would have guessed how much the poor creature passed through, seeing how little she said about it.

Some daughters would have helped to bear this brunt, and comforted and consoled with brave, loving words and little tender ministrations; but Alice Ainslie, though not an abnormally selfish girl, was too full of her own concerns to have much time or sympathy to spare for those of others. She would occasionally kiss her mother and tell her not to 'bother;' and she would indignantly turn upon her brother, and vow it was 'a shame' for Bob to expect to have everything done for him like a baby; but she was generally full of some project or other got up by her own friends, with whom she was a favourite—or she was just going out—or had just come in and must take off her things—or she had a dozen notes to send off—in some way or other she was busy,

and had so obvious an impatience of being caught, and such a palpable desire to be left in peace to pursue her own devices, that there was no help to be had from her when difficulties arose on the family horizon.

Sometimes Lady Ainslie wondered what would be the end of these, or whether they would ever have an end at all.

Sir Robert's solicitor had airily named 'half a dozen years or so' as the limits of their enforced wanderings; of these, three had been spent; but so far from being in any better case, they were in worse than when their exile began.

The boys were more expensive; Alice was grown up; there were all kinds of unforeseen claims to be met, and the rents on the estate were lower than ever. She would sit brooding over every tradesman's account even for the plainest necessaries, considering whether she could not find a cheaper butcher or green-grocer; then start up and hide the gruesome red book out of sight, and force the smile of welcome into her face when gay visitors were announced brimful of news and vivacity. She could not bear that they should think her less light-hearted and jocular and smart than they. She would not mention such a thing as care, but would prattle of balls, concerts, wedding trousseaux, the latest engagement, anything and everything but the subject which haunted her days and nights; she would send the party away with the careless promise to follow to some place of fashionable resort, 'where Alice had already gone with some friends;' but the same visitors would say to each other as they drove from the door, 'Poor Lady Ainslie, how ill she looks! How different from what she used to look at Robert's Tower!'

And as one and all shrewdly suspected what it was which had wrought the change, and there were among those who came to the lodgings many who had formerly been welcomed to the old Scotch country seat; and as human nature is not so bad but that it has its better points, the Ainslies received the invitations which tided them over the most dreaded months of the year, and which, as we know, saw them in Scotland on the August in question.

We can now perhaps understand, and some of us may even enter into, the feelings with which this overburdened parent beheld something of a chance of better days in the 'love at first sight'—if such a sentiment in such a breast can be so termed—of her son for Penelope East.

At first, indeed, her satisfaction confined itself simply to the fact that Bob would now be willing to call a halt where a halt was

most desirable; but a brief conversation with Lady Carnoustie, during which she learned the solitary circumstance that the young lady was the only daughter of a wealthy Jamaica merchant, opened a field for her imagination which in former days would have been dangerous. She would never have been able to keep her hopes to herself.

But caution had been slowly begotten of many a bitter pain. Again and again she had had to eat her own words, and salve the disappointment created by her own over-haste; and with a shadowy recollection of there being something inscrutable about the Carnousties in bygone times, she bit her lips to prevent any imprudence which might now have disastrous results. She really dared not continue the engrossing dialogue. She felt as if her thoughts, hopes, and plans, even to the tenants' ball to celebrate the wedding and home-coming, were legible on her face,—and rose to admire the view from the window at the very moment when Lady Carnoustie was deplored Penelope's motherless girlhood, and the indubitable fact that she was a 'London girl.'

A London girl! There never was such luck. It was all that was required for a man of fashion, who had no taste for country-bred misses. A London girl, indeed! Could not Lady Carnoustie see what an admission she had made? But no, Lady Carnoustie and all the Carnousties hated London, and abhorred London society.

Well, well; there was something to be said on both sides. Lady Ainslie, poor and hard bested, was by no means so fond of the metropolis as had been Lady Ainslie, prosperous and at ease; and her last two seasons had been dreary enough for anyone. 'Indeed, I am very tired of London myself!' she now allowed with a sigh.

Bob, however, was known to be of a different opinion, and it was Bob who was the person to be consulted.

With feverish delight she beheld him dart to Penelope's side on the reappearance of the gentlemen; and throughout the evening, whichever way she looked, and to whomsoever she outwardly directed her attention, she saw only the two figures in the distant recess, and beyond that a bewildering haze of joyful anticipations.

Penelope, on her part, was quite in the humour to be made love to.

Her heart was full and sore, although she did not know it, and would not have believed it; at any rate, it is certain that while resolved upon a match between Redwood and her cousin,

she almost hated herself for having projected the idea, and was angry with everyone else for apparently falling in with it.

Redwood, it is true, did not seem to make much of the present opportunity ; but she had Tosh's word for it that he was seriously disposed to come forward ; and then had she not deliberately decided that he was the right and proper husband for a girl who was in urgent need of a husband ? Mina must be taken care of. There was no saying what she might not do, or stoop to, if left alone with her own sad thoughts through the long, lonely winter months to follow ; and considering that she already liked Redwood, and he her, and that the stubborn and usually inaccessible family had been won over, it would have been in Penelope's eyes dastardly to let any trivial *penchant* on her part interfere with her readiness to forward the affair.

Hers was but a passing fancy. She rather liked Mr. Redwood ; but what of that ? To Mina it might be a matter of life and death, of lifelong happiness or misery. How detestable would be any reluctance on Penelope's part to make all smooth, all as easy as possible for the poor girl who had been so submissive to her authority, shown such a ready penitence for the past, and made such tearful promises for the future !

There is a noble pleasure in self-sacrifice which ofttimes misleads the inexperienced. To pain and hurt oneself for the sake of another seems so grand a thing to do, that in the very smart there lies the balm of self-approbation ; and just because it gave my heroine an ache at her heart to consider how best she might work out the scheme she had in hand, she made sure the scheme in itself was all that was worthy and honourable.

Anyway, she was going to do it. That was the end of every struggle and internal controversy. She was not going to be turned aside like a weathercock just because Redwood—what did he mean by stopping short before he was well inside the door and talking to Mr. Soutter, instead of advancing up the room to where Mina and Alice Ainslie were turning over the music, with the look and step of joyful alacrity that Captain Ainslie was displaying towards herself ?

She wished he would get on a little faster ; be a little more consistent and loverlike.

He would be the better for a lesson, perhaps.

Accordingly, she made room for Ainslie to sit by her in the recess ; and Felix Merriman, who had meant to have his turn of the beauty after dinner, found himself obliged to be interested in

Lady Carnoustie's broken harp-strings, which he had been foolish enough to say he could mend, and which he was now invited to inspect, and all but asked to tackle on the spot.

That, however, he evaded by promising to look in on his way back from the moor the following afternoon; but the delay had been fatal; he was now too late to catch up with the nimble soldier who had opened his batteries anew, and had no intention of permitting anyone but himself to come within range of his fair quarry.

'Mamma, do you know that girl is an heiress?' demanded Alice Ainslie of her mother at bedtime. 'Did you see her and Bob? Does Bob know?'

'Hush, my dear, hush! Yes, I know. Take care, Alice, love. I would not have anyone hear you for the world. And these great rooms'—Lady Ainslie looked apprehensively round—'one never knows who may be hidden about in them.'

'Oh, it's all right,' said Alice impatiently. 'But, mamma, who told you? When did you find out? I only heard just now. And you have always been dying for Bob to fall in love with an heiress.'

'I know, my dear, I know. It is wonderful—quite wonderful. Such a pretty girl, and such charming manners! I am sure she has charming manners, though I did not speak to her except to say "Good-night." But Bob, who is so very particular—'

'Particular! Hum!'

'You know, Alice, he will not be decently civil to those Ladies Pollard. He says they are so countrified and bumpkinish—'

'They are very much better mannered as well as better born than most of the girls Bob admires. They are not pretty, and they are not smart; but it is great impudence of Bob to find fault with their manners. I expect they have snubbed him—'

'Oh, well, my dear, well; what does it matter? That is not what we are talking about. You wished to tell me about this Miss Penelope East. We both see that Bob is *épris* with her, and, as far as I could judge, and they were sitting exactly opposite me at dinner, she seemed equally taken with him.'

'She was willing to be flirted with, at any rate.'

'You don't think anything more?' A pang shot through the speaker's heart. 'But why then did you come in as you did just now? You seemed quite full of it; and I must own I too had been thinking—and hoping,' a pause. 'It would be such a great, great thing for us all,' the poor lady murmured at last with a sigh.

‘You poor mamma!’ The daughter’s heart experienced a twinge of pity. ‘You do worry about us all; and Bob is a dreadful plague, I know. What did he come on these visits for? It only frets you; and it is so much more difficult to offer ourselves about, when we are such a party. If there had only been us three! ’

But this had often been discussed before.

‘It may turn out to be the very best arrangement that could have been made,’ cried Lady Ainslie, suddenly plucking up spirit. ‘Suppose we have brought Bob to this quiet old place, where he is the only young man staying in the house, where he will have no one to interfere with him, and he finds located as one of the family this beautiful and charming heiress——’

‘You do pile it on, mamma; but we must make allowances. *I* don’t call this Penelope beautiful,—but she is rather pretty and awfully well dressed. That’s good enough for Bob, provided she can talk, and will put up with his talk.’

‘Put up? My dear Alice, *everyone* finds your brother pleasant.’

‘Oh, he can run on, I know; and I must own he seemed to be having it all his own way to-night.’

‘He did indeed,’ delightedly.

‘But, mamma——’ Alice hesitated. ‘I do not want to damp you, and I know it is often too bad the way Bob worries and badgers you, and won’t do anything for himself, but makes you go to papa for him, and give him your own money——’

‘No, no, my dear,’ terrified. ‘Really, Alice, you must not say such things.’

‘They are true, all the same; but I won’t say them if it teases you. And if you are in hopes that Bob may turn over a new leaf, and marry a rich girl, and settle down at Robert’s Tower——’

Lady Ainslie sighed.

‘Or even let us get back, if we had no more to pay for him, and no need to continue his allowance,’ hinted Alice shrewdly.

‘Possibly—yes, indeed—possibly. But oh, my dear, why do you torment me so? First you say one thing, and then the other. One minute you appear as if you really thought something might come of it; and the next you throw cold water on the very idea! How can I possibly tell what you do think?’

‘I don’t suppose it very much matters what I think. It will not affect anybody.’

'Then why, in Heaven's name, do you look so odd and dubious, as if there were something you could say, if you would? What is it? What makes you imagine Penelope was not—not a little—that she was only flirting with Bob?

'Did you happen to notice Mr. Redwood's face while the flirting was going on?'

'Mr. Redwood? The young shooting man? The tall one?'

'Yes. The good-looking one. He took Mina Carnoustie in to dinner.'

'Ah, yes. Yes, to be sure, I noticed him. I thought that might be another little affair, perhaps.'

Alice smiled. 'I don't think so, mamma.'

'Not? But Mina is still a nice-looking girl, though she has lost her complexion, the bright pink colour she used to have in her cheeks.'

'No pink colour would have done anything for Mina to-night. Mamma, you are not usually blind, but, of course, Mr. Redwood was on your side of the table. Now I, who was just opposite him, had the post of observation. He simply could not take his eyes off Penelope's face.'

Lady Ainslie started.

'Oh yes, I know what I am talking about,' proceeded her daughter coolly. 'It is quite true what I am telling you. I don't know if Penelope returned the glances, for you see she was out of my range.'

'She did not. I assure you she did not. She never looked at anyone but Bob.'

'All right, but in the evening there was the same scene over again. Mr. Redwood talked to nobody but the old factor man. But if you noticed, he was standing where he could see straight into the recess, and it seemed to be as much as he could do to keep from betaking himself thither. Mamma, you will be sure to make no remark on this. You won't say anything to the Carnousties? It would never do. I am sure they are touchy people.'

'They are, indeed.'

'Only I thought it was as well to tell you, when you spoke of Bob's having the field all to himself, that there was possibly another young man in the field, and one who is not to be despised either. Bob must hurry up.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AN ACCIDENT 'À PROPOS.'

FOR the next few days nothing worthy of note happened at Carnoustie Castle.

Then just as both hosts and guests were beginning to feel the strain of incessant good behaviour, and to have their confidences and complaints among themselves, an incident occurred to put a new face upon everything.

Captain Ainslie, on returning from the moor late one afternoon, stumbled over a loose stone and dislocated his knee-joint.

The odd thing was (according to Lady Ainslie and her daughter in private), that the accident was genuine.

They would have thought nothing of an opportune illness, or the exaggeration of some trifling mishap; indeed they had been almost prepared for something of the kind by the unusual quiescence of the young man, and the deaf ear he turned towards family consultations regarding the next move. Instead of pestering his mother with restless inquiries, instead of manifesting any signs of impatience to know the proposed day of departure, he set about the business of the moment as though he had been fixed for ever in the spot where he was, and up to Friday morning nothing had been publicly said about going on the Monday, or even on the Tuesday, according to the programme first laid down.

'We must *offer* to go on Monday, I think,' Lady Ainslie consulted with Alice, the two having retired ostensibly to write letters in their own apartments. 'After the post comes in this afternoon I will go to Lady Carnoustie with a note in my hand, and ask her if she can put up with us till Monday, and murmur something about "to-morrow." If she is cordial—and she is really very cordial and civil, I have never known her so pleasant—I think we might manage to make it Tuesday?' interrogatively. 'What do you think? Do you get on well? Do the girls seem to take to you? Would they be likely to want you to stay?'

'Oh, we get on all right. I should think they would be glad of anyone in this stupid old place. It is not very amusing, but I don't mind it, on the whole. Penelope is some fun.'

'I think it is charming—so peaceful, so beautiful!' poor Lady Ainslie sighed. She had not known three such quiet, com-

fortable days for long. Her husband and son taken off her hands for the time being, and pursuing the proper avocation of mankind in its proper time and place ; Alice sketching and rambling about with two nice young people of her own age and rank ; herself free to recline in an easy chair, and ply a lazy tatting shuttle, or occupy the front seat of a handsome barouche, behind a good pair of horses, for the daily drive—it was all luxury to the poor woman. How invigorating were the sea breezes ! How appetising the delicious game and fruit at meals !

And Alice was getting sea-bathing—the very thing Alice needed.

There had been no sea-bathing for anyone at Carnoustie Castle before the Ainslies came ; but Penelope had seized on the idea suggested by her new companion, and the weather being warm, and the sportsmen on the mountain heights, Lady Carnoustie was graciously pleased to consider that there would be no harm in the two girls taking their maids, equipped with suitable appliances, and finding a sequestered nook among the rocks on the shore, where they could unobserved disport themselves in the waves.

This was indeed the sort of thing that Lady Carnoustie approved. When Penelope in hot haste, and closely followed by her new friend, burst into the room to prefer their joint request, she had at first been a little inclined to draw in her chin, and think that the eager intruders had forgotten their place, that all-important place which it was her own mission in life to inculcate ; but no sooner did she comprehend the nature of the demand than her brow relaxed.

It was such a simple, natural, childlike petition—and, above all things, she desired her children to be simple, natural, and childlike.

Louisa and Joanna had never cared for sea-bathing, and she had been obliged to order them into the water, and insist upon their not crying, and being all the better for the dip afterwards—in spite of blue lips and shivering. Not until the family doctor had intervened, consequent on a cough on Joanna's part which could not be got rid of—and which together with Louisa's chil-blains argued, he explained, a lack of circulation for which bathing, at any rate bathing off the shore, was not desirable—was the ordeal abandoned. And not without considerable reluctance and vexation did Lady Carnoustie consent to perceive that it might be as well never to make a trial in Mina's case. Mina had measles about the time her bathing should have been attended to. The

following year she had whooping cough ; and the next saw her a delicate, growing girl, and Dr. McWhinnock peremptorily put down his foot upon the project. ‘ If you wish to kill your daughter, you can do it, my lady,’ he had exclaimed with the bluntness of a physician and a favourite ; and Lady Carnoustie, to do her justice, never thought a pin the worse of him for it afterwards. She always showed at her best when thus bearded.

But Penelope was now emphatic in her assurance of being strong and hearty ; of having the best circulation in the world ; of having bathed at Folkestone, and at Eastbourne, and at ‘ hundreds of places’ she could not remember where ; besides which Alice Ainslie had been used to her daily dip at Robert’s Tower, and was ‘ simply longing to get into the sea again.’

Her mother also vouched for it that invigorating sea-air, and above all sea-bathing, had been recommended by the faculty.

Accordingly, two glorious summer mornings in succession saw the pair set forth joyously, and what with the distance they had to walk, and one thing and another, it was luncheon time and past it ere they reappeared.

This might have been a misdemeanour, but Lady Carnoustie had taken the bathing under her wing. *She* was the person to whom the laughing mermaids flew for sympathy and congratulation in the adventure ; to her was detailed the description of the enchanting little creek discovered among the rocks, and of the crystal pools which the flowing tide had filled on every side ; she was assured that the water was warm, delicious—so warm that they could hardly come out of it,—and in the end she was actually called upon to know at what time the tide would be favourable on the following day.

All of this was so much choice flattery, most unconsciously administered. Penelope really felt that her elderly relative had an interest in the proceeding and some perception of its delights ; while Alice Ainslie followed her lead, and meeting with more response from the dignified matron than from her obviously unsympathetic offspring, perceived quickly how the land lay. Louisa and Joanna could scarcely hear the name of bathing without a shudder ; while Mina confessed the idea had for her no kind of attraction ; but Lady Carnoustie, on the other hand, experienced a vague sense of having at last had her opinion of a wholesome exercise endorsed and justified.

About the tide ? Well, really she thought the gardeners or the fishermen had better be consulted. She could not take it upon

herself to say, but of course the tide did alter every day, and she believed it was usually high tide later one day than another. Penelope, with a queer look, informed her that it was an hour later (Penelope had never rested until she had made herself mistress of every fact concerning its ebb and flow, from those best qualified to impart such knowledge)—and the point was how should they manage about luncheon?

It was only at high tide the creek was available, and the creek was by far the best place to be had; but then unfortunately it would be some time between twelve and one the next day—the speaker paused, and looked suggestively at her hostess.

‘Could you not bathe in the afternoon?’ suggested Lady Ainslie, anxious to make all smooth.

‘I don’t think aunt Carnoustie would approve of that. It is not considered good for people, is it, auntie?’ Penelope shook her wet hair out over her shoulders, and sat down with a hearty appetite. ‘Alice’s hair is dry already, but mine takes such a time,’ proceeded she. ‘We had to come home with towels over our shoulders, hadn’t we, Alice? And we think they must have seen us from the moor, for we could see them quite distinctly, banging away; at one time they were no distance off. They must have seen our white shoulders as we trotted home. Well, auntie, what about to-morrow’s bathe? May we have something kept for us, if we come in late for luncheon?’

But Lady Carnoustie had a great idea. Penelope’s acuteness in recalling a well-known medical dictum had been just in time. She had actually opened her lips to second Lady Ainslie’s proposition, entirely oblivious of what she had in former years been wont to inculcate, and she felt grateful for having been saved from exposing her inconsistency.

‘It would indeed be most unwise to go off directly after a meal,’ she now observed profoundly, ‘and I suppose it would hardly do to wait till later in the afternoon.’

‘No good doing that, auntie. If the tide had gone down, we should be no better off than if the tide had not come up.’

‘Then all I can think of is, that you should take your luncheon with you.’

‘And let the maids prepare it on the rocks while we are in the sea! And have it as soon as ever we come out, without all this rushing, hot walk back—and we could sit and rest ourselves, and come home quite slowly afterwards—’

‘Or we might pick you up for a drive?’ said Lady Carnoustie,

smiling ; and Penelope with a smile in return, after a moment's hesitation accepted the offer. Penelope was a very shrewd little woman.

'They speak as if they thought we were going to stay on,' mused Lady Ainslie, resting her pen, which had already begun a sentence descriptive of the pleasure with which the party was anticipating the next visit on the list. 'If I only knew what to do ! I never dreamed of Bob's being satisfied to remain beyond Monday at the latest.'

'I thought you had settled it was to be Tuesday. Or was it Monday ? You are to offer to go upon Monday and be pressed on to Tuesday.'

'But I should like it to be Wednesday, or even Thursday.'

'Oh, I dare say they'll keep us,' said Alice coolly. 'We aren't much trouble. And they have nobody coming that I can hear of. I am sure I must be a godsend to Penelope.'

'But I hope you don't neglect the Carnousties.'

Alice laughed. 'Mamma, they are such queer old things ; they are a great deal more ancient than you. They are even more ancient than their mother—and that is saying something. Oh, I don't think they mind being neglected. We take Mina about with us sometimes. But we really can't tack on the others.'

'Bob seems to be getting on so well.'

Alice was silent.

'You don't say anything ? Do you not consider he is getting on well ?'

'I don't think he is making much impression, you know, mamma. Penelope is ready enough to laugh and flirt ; I don't know that it is even flirting ; she is just the same with Lord Carnoustie and everybody—or at least every man ; she is the kind of girl who naturally gets on better with men than with women. There is no harm in it.'

'Harm ? Certainly not. I was considered to do the same myself, and yet I never was called a flirt—at least, not a great flirt.'

'I expect you did pretty well, mamma. I always hear about your "flames" and your "dancing partners ;" and there are one or two papa is quite cross about to this day.'

'No ; nonsense !' but her mother smiled. 'I am sure if I ever had any—any little coquetry in me, it has all been knocked out by this time ;' the smile faded into a sigh. 'If I could only see you all happily provided for !'

'Which means Bob. Yes, mamma, settle Bob, and the rest

of us will do very well for ourselves. I own Bob is a caution. And yet, you know,' proceeded Miss Ainslie after a pause, 'it is such a new thing for Bob to be in earnest himself, that it really may be the occasion of his being taken *au sérieux* by Penelope. Bob has proposed to half the girls he knows—or says he has. I am inclined to believe it, for I really think he would find it easier to propose than not; but he has always been quite pleased and relieved after each affair has come to an end, and seems to look upon his having been refused as though he had rounded off the flirtation satisfactorily, and behaved as was expected of him.'

'My dear Alice, how you talk! If it were as you say, he would certainly have been hooked by this time.'

'Oh, he would have been hooked fast enough if there had been anything to hook. But nobody wants him. He has probably told every girl at intervals how poor he is, and what a bad look-out he has—you know his frank, engaging way of blurting out with this,—while at the same time he goes everywhere, never denies himself anything, is always well dressed and well mounted—'

'Now, my dear Alice, do, pray, let this side of the question alone. There is no need whatever to drag it in. You are never just to your brother. It is very hard upon a young man in his position, heir to a baronetcy, and placed by his father in a smart regiment, to find himself obliged to economise.'

'I don't see that. Why is it harder for him than for us?'

'It *is* harder; I don't know why,' impatiently.

'Simply because we are women and have to put up with it. You, for instance: look at your travelling-trunk and at Bob's! Yours is so old and worn it will hardly hold together. I was quite ashamed to see it put out of the steamboat; and then followed Bob's new leather portmanteau, and gun-case, and—'

'Alice, you might spare me this. If you really pitied me, you would show your pity by trying to help, not by reproaches and railing. You are young, and do not understand—'

Indistinct protest.

'At any rate, he is really in love now, and who knows what it may do for him?' and Lady Ainslie resolutely set herself to compose her paragraphs and calculate their effect.

This had taken place about twelve o'clock; by five the same afternoon Captain Ainslie was brought home in a dogcart, having been trundled down the hill-path in a wheelbarrow. He really was badly hurt, and made as little of his pain as anybody could.

But he did not wish to rise from the couch to which the doctor ordered him, and submitted to rest and low diet with praiseworthy docility.

Dr. McWhinnock pronounced that the dislocated joint which he had set must remain absolutely immovable for some days; nay, in confidence he told Lady Carnoustie that it might have to be kept so for some weeks to come. It had been an awkward wrench, and though the case was a perfectly straightforward one, he could not take it upon himself to say what time might be required before Captain Ainslie could be as he was before. The captain would certainly have to lie still for a bit. Then he would go about upon crutches, and could be taken out for drives; but as for his mounting the paddle-boxes of steamers and the box-seats of coaches, and careering away on a tour of pleasure all over the Highlands, it was not to be thought of.

Lady Carnoustie looked very grave as she listened.

Then McWhinnock, understanding the gravity, pressed her closer. He owned the accident was unfortunate and inconvenient. No doubt the captain was already fretting over the amount of annoyance he was causing, and provoked with himself for being the cause of disarranging everyone's plans; but the poor young gentleman could not help it. Anyone might stumble over the stones on the moors. They were one mass of loose stones, as her ladyship knew. He had heard authorities say that nowhere in Scotland was the glacial development more extraordinary than in the island, and naturally a stranger would not step as carefully as one who knew the place. Then the worthy doctor started afresh.

Lord Carnoustie, he affirmed, had been very huffy both with Captain Ainslie for falling, and with himself for saying it was easy to fall on his lordship's moor; but her ladyship would be more reasonable, more ready to allow that the hill-side was not as smooth walking as it looked.

'Oh, I have always said there were dangerous places,' said she.

'Just so. Your ladyship has observed that? So I thought. I told Captain Ainslie that some of us—meaning your ladyship—had often remarked upon the dangerous footing. Lord Carnoustie takes it for certain that everyone is as sure of foot as himself.'

But what Lady Carnoustie wanted to know was not whether or not the patient had been to blame in the first instance, but for how long she should have him on her hands now. As far as she

could gather, there was no chance of Captain Ainslie's being well enough to leave with the rest early in the following week, and what if they insisted on waiting for him?

By this time she was beginning to have had enough of her visitors. They were not offensive; they were one and all doing their best to be accommodating—indeed, no people to be there at all, could have been less burdensome. But what was all very well for a short and fixed limit of time, might turn into a prospect too terrible to contemplate, if its horizon were dim and distant.

For a few mornings she had found herself quite able to sit up in state over her wool-work, with Lady Ainslie ensconced at the other end of the sofa; to take her for a drive in the afternoon, and a turn in the garden before dinner; and, being in very fair health at the time, she had rejoiced in being thus able to do her part in hospitality. She had devoted herself to her guest, according to old-fashioned ideas on the subject; never left her alone for a minute of the day, save during the single hour which etiquette permitted for the writing of supposititious letters, and prepared herself heroically for the fatigue of each evening's elaborate toilette, and the later hours which it was thought requisite to keep under the circumstances.

Ordinarily, she rarely remained in the drawing-room after ten o'clock, but it was a full hour later every night before she rose on the rare occasions when company of consequence was being entertained at the castle.

To go on with all this? And that not for one, two, or three days more, but indefinitely? Lady Carnoustie called her elder daughters into her private sitting-room, and frankly owned she could not do it.

Louisa and Joanna were quite sure she could not. It would be far too much for dear mamma. She would herself be knocked up next.

Dear mamma then put it to them—Could Captain Ainslie remain behind, and let the others depart?

The docile pair glanced at each other, and their leader's foot began to tap the floor. What were they waiting for? Surely they could give a plain answer to a plain question? Why should Captain Ainslie not stay? The sisters' brows cleared, and, perceiving simultaneously what was expected of them, they hastened to assure the speaker that, strange and peculiar as such a course might be, it was open.

'You think he could stay?'

They thought so ; they really thought so.

‘We could hardly let him go,’ proceeded Lady Carnoustie. ‘That is to say, I do not suppose he *could* go. But it is very awkward ; it is very tiresome. And Dr. McWhinnock looks at me as if he thought I were some cruel monster, merely because I do not jump at the idea and am not transported with delight ! I wonder how Dr. McWhinnock would like to have a young man laid up at *his* house—especially such a flighty young man as this Captain Ainslie ? I—I— upon my word, it is exceedingly troublesome.’

But, troublesome or not, she came to the conclusion that it would be a vast deal preferable to have Bob by himself than Bob with father, mother, and sister in addition.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BOB, BY HIMSELF.

SIMPLE, however, as such a decision was when arrived at in family conclave, it proved to be by no means so easy to carry into effect, as many a host and hostess will understand.

Guests who have been welcomed with effusion, who like their quarters, and find that no one else is expected consequent on their departure, are often more than a match for their entertainers when it comes to a tussle on the point. Are they to go on a certain date or not ?

There is no earthly reason why they should go, except that they have stayed long enough, according to the views of the latter, and these views hospitality sternly demands should be kept in the background.

Wherefore, when the half-hearted suggestion has been met by the faint demur or the ill-assumed regret, the real tug-of-war begins.

‘No, really, we have trespassed long enough. You must be quite tired of us by this time,’ protests Madame Guest. (N.B.—Be sure it is the women who have this part of the work to do.)

‘Not at all. Pray do not think of such a thing. Only we must not keep you all to ourselves. We must not detain you from more amusing places,’ murmurs Madame Host.

Madame Guest then assures her that no spot on earth can be more amusing, more *congenial* than Hum-drum Deadly-Dulness,

where she only wishes she had not already paid her delightful visit, &c., &c.

Madame Host (rathered scared) is *so* pleased, *so* rejoiced that she and hers have been able to do a little for their kind friends, and next time they will endeavour to have a few others to meet them; and she does hope Madame Guest will not be so long again in coming to Hum-drum Deadly-Dulness, &c., &c.

Really Madame Guest can hardly say. Life is so uncertain. It may be years before such another happy meeting can be arranged. (This is meant to suggest: 'Keep us now, and perhaps we will let you off in the future. "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."')

If Madame Host has a tolerable amount of backbone, she will, however, reject this bait and maintain a resolute silence, and then the more subtle test of the angler's skill is called into play.

'How many posts a day do you have, dear?'

Usually the answer will be: 'Two. One in the morning and one in the afternoon.'

'Oh, then there is still a possibility?' Half-audible murmur, as though to herself.

Madame Host, if quick-witted, is on the alert in an instant, and declines to inquire into the meaning of the 'possibility.' She has a shrewd idea that it will land her in quicksands. There have been lamentations earlier in the day over the non-arrival of some important document.

Instead, she now starts on a lengthy dissertation regarding postal arrangements, from them digresses to parcel posts, six-penny telegrams, halfpenny cards, and Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Gladstone reached, she is safe for the time being.

It signifies little to her that Madame Guest is *distracte* and unresponsive. She only desires to tide over the evil interview, and bring it to a close under the impression on both sides that the hour of departure is to remain fixed.

Fortune favouring her, she may, if she be a clever woman and well up to her business, achieve this end. But alas! Fortune is more apt to jeer and point the finger than to render aid under the circumstances; and Madame Guest is not far wrong in holding on like grim death to the chance of something or other turning up which shall compel the proffered renewal of hospitality.

In nine cases out of ten this will be wrung out of the male contingent of the party. 'Hang it all!' say they. 'What could we do? The poor people have nowhere else to go, and we only

meant to be civil, when they caught us up, and—and—it wasn't our fault, anyway.'

Thus in the case before us, when the unfortunate Lady Carnoustie, at some violence to her own feelings, had let hint after hint go by, and had even contrived to be busy and deaf to Lady Ainslie's lively astonishment and regret, expressed aside to her daughter over the unfortunate change of route which would have to be made, consequent on the result of a letter received, and which was handed ostentatiously to Alice to read, it was Lord Carnoustie—Lord Carnoustie who was sick to death of his visitors, with the exception of Bob, who suited him by sheer force of contrast, and whose whimsical affectations and anecdotes were diverting—it was he who made all his wife's precautions of none effect.

Perceiving that the women were invincible, and that even Penelope, whilst she showed genuine regret for the loss of her new companion—indeed the little weathercock had whirled round, and was now full of Alice Ainslie and of a new piece of fun into which Alice had initiated her, namely, riding about all over the country on the broad-backed Shetland ponies belonging to the home farm—perceiving, we say, that even Penelope could only groan into Alice's ear, not daring to give vent to what she felt by so much as a syllable (a syllable, at least, which could be utilised), the hapless dowager, divining that in the bluff old lord himself lay her only hope, threw her last die.

She hardly expected any good to accrue from it. She was half afraid of Carnoustie, mistaking for pride and ill-humour what was in reality a mixture of shyness and awe on his part. He had a great opinion of women of the world such as herself. He did not like them; he did not feel at ease with them. But although he had lived for so long out of society, he had lingering recollections of the gay whirl without his gates, which made him anxious not to be despised by the votaries of fashion. Indeed, he had a far greater respect for a giddy dame of quality, or for a smart, feather-pated youth who was the rage for the time being, than Lady Carnoustie at all approved.

'Why should we mind what people of that stamp think?' she had loftily observed when her husband somewhat uneasily suggested cutting short the long sermon and prayers in vogue at the castle on Sunday evenings. 'You yourself say the Ainslies are not religious—'

'Well, neither are we,

‘ Carnoustie ! ’

‘ We’re not—not particularly. We never set up to be. Hoots ! We do well enough ; but if we were really religious people, like some people I know, we would be very different from what we are. ‘ Well, well,’ perceiving indignant remonstrance on her brow, ‘ well, well ; maybe *you* are—or you think yourself so, because you give away a wheen ¹ books and tracts, and go to church, and to sacrament, and pick out the longest sermons you can find for me to read while you sleep ;—but I know what *I* call religion. My mother—rest her soul !—was a religious woman. How she taught us, prayed with us, set us an example ! All the country-side revered her—she fed them, doctored them, visited every house within her reach—the poor blessed her name—ay, and not the poor only, Carnoustie Castle was a house of God in those days ; the fame of it was known throughout the length and breadth of Scotland. God help me ! I’m an unworthy son of such a mother ;’ and, to the infinite consternation of his amazed spouse, the old man’s voice had broken, and his grey head had sunk upon his breast.

Lady Carnoustie had been unable to utter a word. By-and-by she had crept away to her closet more humbled and shaken than she had been for years ; and thereafter and for some time subsequently her speech was gentler, and her decisions less hard and dictatorial, than any had remembered them before.

It had cut her to the soul to be told the truth in her husband’s homely, unsparing words.

She had taken not only her own piety, but that of all the family and household, for granted. She abhorred the pleasures and pursuits of the world ; she turned her back upon every form of dissipation ; she shrank from fashionable society. On the other hand, she was strict in exacting from one and all beneath her sway conformity to religious observances, and woe betide the child or the servant who sought to evade them ; she ordered largely from tract societies, and though she did not herself peruse the literature with which the house was thus supplied, she had it lying about, and anyone who asked could have ; and she lay on her sofa and lamented that other matrons and maids were not as she and her daughters.

But that, of course, was not as Lady Carnoustie saw it. Indeed, she had, as we say, taken her piety in a *ça va sans dire* fashion.

To have her husband all at once turn upon her, and com-

¹ ‘ Few.’

pare her with his mother! Her bosom swelled 'twixt wounded pride and startled discomfiture. It was too bad of Carnoustie; and yet she felt with an inner perturbation and trembling that he who had thus smote her in the tenderest point had passed beyond the reach of her displeasure, and that there were in his plain dealing an earnestness and a disregard of consequences which could have been induced by no ordinary conviction. And he had told her that she slept whilst he read! Now, it was a fact that her ladyship, who was no reader, nor yet listener, never could keep properly awake during the Sunday lecture, and was for ever catching herself dozing off, and wondering whether anyone else had caught her. She felt that she could never dare again to let herself go, and accordingly not a word did she say when Carnoustie, with an inkling of how the land lay, pursued hot-foot the advantage he had gained.

'I think I'll just go on with this book. I like it better than yon,' he remarked easily, after the Sunday which became known in family annals thereafter as 'The Ainslie Sunday,' and though he spoke boldly, and looked full in her face as he did so, she only replied, 'Very well, my dear;' a piece of acquiescence over which the recreant had many a secret chuckle. 'I should have taken her in hand sooner,' he told himself.

This is not so much of a digression as it may seem to our readers. We wish it to be comprehended how at this especial moment Lord Carnoustie was riding with a high hand in the family, also why his wife did not care to pass animadversions on his respectful aversion to his principal lady visitor, and call him over the coals to be at once more civil and less yielding.

His plan was to give himself as little trouble as he could about Lady Ainslie, while at the same time resolute that everyone else should be at her beck and call.

'Whatever you do, don't have her going away and saying we live in a beggarly way and don't know the fashions, and are *behind-hand*, and all that,' he cried; for he and nurse Alison had this in common, that each yearned to be thought *à la mode*, though the old nurse was so far ahead of her master that she would have been really happy to be so, while the moil and trouble of it would have been intolerable to him, and he only coveted the semblance. 'Stick up to her, all of ye! Talk scandal, and trumpery, and let her think ye're as well up to all the London trash as she and her set. Don't drag the *Souters* into the conversation. There is no need to say anything about the *Souters*. Very worthy people; but Lady

Ainslie won't care to be bothered with such as them ; and she will stare if we have nobody to talk about but my factor and his sisters. There's Redwood—cram Redwood down her throat. There is no need for her to know he is only here for a few months, or so. Make as much as ye can of him and that friend of his—though, between ourselves, Merriman's a vulgarish fellow. I had not noticed him before the other night ; but when he came out in talk after dinner, and I looked at him with Sir Robert's eyes, and still more with the eyeglass of the Bob creature, I saw we were wrong in having him ; not that we could help ourselves ; we could not have left him out of the invitation ; but it was a pity it happened so. Redwood has him because he is a good shot, of course ; and that's what we must make Lady Ainslie understand. For all her fine-ladyisms, she has the sense to know that many a man gets an invitation in the shooting season who would never be thought of out of it.'

He had himself instructed her ladyship on the point and found her more than amiable. He was not to know that he might have said anything with equal impunity ; that the wildest statements and most perplexing arguments would have received her assenting smile, so long as he would offer her a ready arm in to dinner, and bid her a cheery 'Good night' at the close of the evening, and each day talk of something to be done or seen on the next.

She was perfectly right in surmising that such planning was not accidental, that it was a delicate way of saying 'Our house is still at your disposal, and shall be so till you of your own free will abandon it ;' and accordingly, as long as she dared, she tacitly accepted the position. But at length the moment had come when something must be said, and it was, as our readers know, only a few hours before Captain Ainslie's opportune accident that mother and daughter decided to break the spell.

There is no need to dwell on the varied feelings and secret consultations to which the new turn of affairs gave rise.

They may be surmised by all ; suffice it to say that each party had to make certain concessions, but that at length the sturdy dictum of that arbiter of fate, the doctor, brought the situation to a close in a manner fairly satisfactory to all.

Dr. McWhinnock bluntly told his patient that he must remain where he was and as he was for some weeks to come ; and turning to Lady Ainslie, who stood by, as unceremoniously informed her that it would be nonsense for herself or any of her family to put themselves out by staying on at Carnoustie Castle, for that 'the

captain' would be far better left quietly behind to complete his cure without so many fussing round him.

'The captain' grinned as the doctor spoke.

'You tramp to-morrow, mater,' he remarked, placidly.

'Yes, oh, certainly; we could not wish to inflict ourselves a day longer on our kind friends than is absolutely necessary,' replied she, scarcely knowing whether to be pleased or rueful. 'Indeed, I am quite ashamed already. We have been here ten days as it is' (this was to remind her hearers that they had not been longer)—'ten days is quite a visitation; but then, one has to make such an effort to get to these out-of-the-way places, and one can come so seldom—still, of course, we are being anxiously expected elsewhere; so that if I am really assured we can be spared from my poor son's side;' and the lady assumed an interrogative accent, and addressed herself to the doctor with impressiveness.

'Ye can be spared pairfetly, my leddy. 'Deed, to speak plain truth, he'll do best withoot ye,' rejoined Dr. McWhinnock in his broadest, driest accent. Then he paused and remarked meditatively, 'There's a good boat to-morrow at noon.'

(To be continued.)

Polar Bear Shooting on the East Coast of Greenland.¹

THE polar bear differs from its brown cousin not only in colour, but in being the possessor of a more elongated body, higher hind quarters, and a longer neck. It considerably exceeds the former in size and strength, and by reason of its somewhat shorter ears and smaller eyes has a wilder expression. It is a majestic animal, moving in ordinary circumstances with the quietness and security of a despot conscious of his own invincible superiority; but though large and heavy it is remarkably agile, and can cover the most uneven ice with astonishing rapidity. The powerful fore-limbs are its usual weapon, and well it knows how to use them; a single blow is often enough to despatch a seal.

Its principal food consists of the flesh of seal and walrus, but it also condescends to the carcases of whales, the larger kinds of fish, and other aquatic animals, and even, for want of anything better, to marine vegetables. It wanders about continually in search of seal, generally against the wind, as it has a good nose. That it can smell the seal so far off must also be attributed to the pure air which uninterrupted sweeps the surface of the ice in these high latitudes. In catching its prey it often shows remarkable cunning. Although a good swimmer and diver, it cannot reach the seal in the water, but must take them on the ice. This is no easy task, for the seal is wary, hears and sees well, and always keeps close to the edge of the floe in order to be able to take to the water at the first approach of danger. The bear, however, knows well enough how to outwit it; it marks the seal at some distance, and then creeps forward under cover of projections and pieces of ice; to deaden the sound it twists its feet in such a way that the hairy side is underneath, and in this manner succeeds in coming noiselessly on its victim. If the ice be flat

¹ Translated by E. H. Hearr, from *Norsk Idrætsbladet*.

and offer no shelter, the bear dives under the floes and appears suddenly in the opening near which the seal is lying. Even when basking on a lonely floe in open water it is not safe, for the bear glides noiselessly down from the ice, swims out towards the floe with only its nose visible above the surface of the water, and, when at a suitable distance, dives completely under and comes up close to the seal. It has been observed how, like the Eskimo, the bear will lie for hours watching the seal-holes—holes which the seal keep open in the ice to enable them to get upon it—ready to strike with its paw the first which is incautious enough to stick its head up.

The smaller seal are an easy prey, while on the other hand the bladder-nose and walrus may cost it many a hard fight. I saw a place where a fight of this kind had taken place between a bladder-nose and a bear, and the marks in the snow showed them to have been two mighty warriors. The body of the bladder-nose was still lying there, part of the blubber had been eaten up, but the flesh lay untouched, and the marks and gashes proved that it had not given in without a struggle.

In the months of March and April the bear has happy days; it is then that the seal bring forth their young, which for the first three weeks cannot go into the water. In the breeding-places thousands upon thousands of them lie dotted about on the ice, and the bear can now revel in its favourite dainties of blood and blubber. It is said to often 'play' with these poor innocents, much in the same way that a cat plays with a mouse—taking them in its mouth, tossing them into the air, rolling them like a ball across the ice, striking them so that they fall over—and then, perhaps after taking a bite, to leave the young seal half-dead and begin its game afresh with a new one.

The polar bear is an intelligent and crafty animal, but it is cursed with an intense curiosity, which Arctic travellers have often discovered to their cost when they have left bags and such like things behind them on the ice. The contents of these have often been thoroughly ransacked, everything eatable devoured, and what the bear has been unable to consume—such as tin boxes and articles of that kind—has been broken in pieces, while other things they have dragged with them a long distance.

Whether or not the polar bear hibernates during the winter has not yet been clearly established, but it seems probable that the female produces her young in a lair, as holes left by them have been found in the snow, while the males and barren females

wander about the whole winter. The pairing season, too, has never been fully determined. Some think it occurs in August, while others, like Julius Payer, are of opinion that, unlike other animals, it is not confined to any particular time, as small cubs are to be met with all the year round. As a general rule, however, it probably pairs in the month of August, and in mid-winter its two cubs are born, which follow the mother from one to two years. She shows the greatest tenderness for them, and never leaves them even in the utmost danger. Of this we find many examples. My own experience has been that she was most careful when she had small cubs, and often ran away with them. To make them keep up with her she uses many devices, sometimes running in front, at other times turning to hurry them along by pushing them in front of her with her paws, or by putting her head between their hind-legs in order to throw them forward, and thus with another short run and a repetition of the former manœuvres she manages to advance with astonishing speed. If one wounds one of the cubs, she does not leave it, but stands and defends it to the end. So long as they are young, too, the cubs do not readily leave the mother. I knew of an instance where the two small cubs, with signs of the greatest affection, followed the body of their mother, which had been shot, to the boat, jumped in after it, sat themselves down on it, and quietly let themselves be taken on board.

The polar bear is not a sociable animal, and the males and females do not go about in company; the two cubs generally keep together for some time after they have left the mother, and are also occasionally to be found near her after she has again had young ones; sometimes even all five are to be met with together, but as a rule it is a solitary animal. It is generally on the alert at night, but keeps quiet during the day.

On the subject of the polar bear's courage and ferocity there is great divergence of opinion; some maintain it is very dangerous, while others scorn it altogether. I think this difference of opinion is mainly attributable to the different circumstances in which it has been met. If it has plenty of food it cares little about human beings. Sometimes at the season for capturing the young seal it has come up, smelt at the skins, and quietly gone its way again without showing any signs of enmity. In Spitzbergen and South Greenland, where it is in the habit of meeting people and being pursued, it flees at the sight of them. But if met in a region where it seldom sees human beings, as, for instance, the east coast of Greenland, and with an empty stomach, one will soon find out

that it is not to be trifled with. It happened several times during the German expedition to the east coast of Greenland in 1869-70 that the crew were attacked by bears, one of the members, Börgen by name, even being dragged a considerable distance. He had been out in the evening to read the thermometer, which was placed on land, and while on his way home to the vessel was suddenly attacked by a bear. Having no time to aim, he tried to frighten it with the bull's-eye lantern which he carried; but without taking the slightest notice of this, the bear threw him down, bit him in a couple of places in the head, and then dragged him some distance. His cries for help were heard on board, and his friends hastened to the spot. On hearing the shots which were fired with the intention of frightening it, the bear retired a few paces, but returned, and seizing the man again dragged him with him at a gallop over the uneven ice. At last it ran away for good. Börgen was badly wounded, but recovered, and, thanks to the thick fur cap he wore, his head was saved from being crushed. But we have examples, too, of how easily the bear can be frightened at times.

One of Dr. Kane's followers who was awakened by the growling of a bear which had put its head in at the tent-door, resorted to the expedient of thrusting a box of lighted sulphur matches under its nose, an insult which it magnanimously forbore to revenge and took itself off.

Polar bear-shooting, with the present quick-loading guns, is not attended with any particular danger, though the animal is very tenacious of life. Even when shot through the heart it is able to go some distance before falling. A bullet through the brain or vertebrae of the neck is the most fatal, and it generally falls without moving a limb. Walrus-hunters, like the Eskimo, often use a harpoon; but this may have dangerous consequences, as it has powerful jaws and knows how to parry the strokes with the greatest adroitness. Scoresby tells us of a polar bear which bit an iron harpoon half an inch thick right across.

In hopes that it may be of interest, I propose to give a few extracts from my diary on polar bear-shooting on the coast of Greenland.

After a sojourn of three and a half months in the Arctic Ocean, we were unfortunate enough at the end of June to get frozen in on the east coast at about $66^{\circ} 50' N.$, where we continued to lie for a month. This was the more deplorable as it was just the best time for seal-catching; but one must submit to fate,

and we consoled ourselves as well as we could by bear-shooting. My diary, however, written on board the *Viking*, sealer, of Arendal, under the command of Captain Axel Krefting, shall tell the tale.

June 28.—As I lay peacefully this morning dreaming of bears which I never got hold of, I was awakened by a whisper in my ear, 'You had better turn out, for we have got a bear right under the ship's side.' Hardly had I heard the word 'bear' before I sprang up, rubbed my eyes, gazed with astonishment at the second mate, who continued whispering as if the bear were outside the cabin-door, 'You must look sharp.' And look sharp I did, for I was up and on deck in a moment with rifle and cartridges. Quite right—there was the bear within range, quietly and reflectively walking backwards and forwards, and stopping now and then to sniff the air and scrutinise the ship which was evidently a novelty. There is no hurry, I thought ; I can very well wait and enjoy the sight of this splendid proud animal till the Captain comes. But why does he not come ? Yes, there he is at last, and I was just turning to speak to him when I heard a report ; as if stung by a serpent I rushed up in order that I too might at least send a shot after the bear on his journey ; but no, undisturbed by such trifles he still walked quietly about, although the bullet had struck the snow close beside him. The shot was from one of the seal-shooters, who could no longer restrain himself. It was therefore best to make our way on to the ice without further delay ; once down I crept along and was soon within range, but the bear had meanwhile caught sight of me, and had gone up on to a hummock or crag of ice to reconnoitre. It was a pretty sight. I aimed just behind the shoulder—one does not shoot in the head for fear of spoiling the skull and skin—pulled the trigger of my rifle, and—it missed fire. It was fatal, and to make everything complete the cartridge stuck fast, so that I nearly tore all my nails off in getting it out ; at last, however, it slipped out, and I was ready to begin again. Luckily the bear, instead of running away as I had expected, approached, and showed me his broad breast. I aimed straight into the whirl of white fur, and this time there was a report. Bruin did not like his reception ; he growled, bit the ground, fell over but jumped up again directly, and started off. I put another cartridge into my rifle, and sent a bullet into his hind quarters, which were now the only visible part of him. A new growl, and a still more hasty retreat. I followed him from floe to floe, but at last they became

too far apart for him to jump, and he had to take to the water. In this way I gained on him, and put a bullet between the shoulder-blades just as he was climbing up the other side of a large piece of ice. He was done for now, and fell back into the water, looking at me furiously out of his small fiery black eyes, but could do no more. Another bullet, and his sufferings were at an end.

The fog meanwhile had become so thick that I could not see the vessel, but on board they had heard the shots, and concluded the bear had fallen a victim. Some of the men soon came up, and we dragged him on board. It was my first polar bear, and with no little pride did I receive the congratulations of the Captain and the others. I was astonished that the first shot had not made short work of him; it proved, however, on closer examination, that the bullet (express bullet .450) had hit him right enough, but had burst in the layer of fat, and only a portion of it had entered the breast. The same thing had happened with the other two; they had caused large external wounds, but had not penetrated far. I thought next time I went bear shooting I would take good care to use something stronger.

June 30.—It is 10 P.M. The Captain and I have just finished our dinner—I may mention in passing that we are so far fashionable that we seldom dine before eight or ten, sometimes not till next day—when Hans, one of the shooters, comes in to say that there is a bear close by. We jump up, get our rifles, and start off, at our leisure be it said, for there is no hurry—the bear is engaged on the carcases of some seal, the remains of our last catch. We soon see and make towards him, but the ice is uneven, and we are obliged to take our time. At last we mount a high hummock, and the bear catches sight of us. We lie down, and without hesitating he comes straight in our direction with his slowly swaying gait; a well-grown fellow he is, and gets over the ground with speed although he seems to be taking it so quietly. He is already behind the hummock immediately in front of us, not fifteen yards away; there is his head visible over the edge, but we do not fire, as that is all we can see of him, and he does not run away. A fine head it is too, the forehead as broad as a barn-door, not to exaggerate. He rolls it backwards and forwards for a little while, then disappears altogether. We hold our rifles ready, for it is impossible to know where he may show himself next. Yes, there is his whole body appearing on the side of the hummock, his breast towards us. Both our shots go off together,

the bear growls, bites his breast, staggers back a couple of paces, and then falls. He soon draws his last breath.

He was a very large animal, 7 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches long, and in such good condition that anybody who had not seen him would hardly believe that the layer of fat on his body was in some places 3 to $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, and the intestines were surrounded and interwoven with fat. He gave altogether over thirty-eight gallons of oil. The bullets had hit him in the middle of the breast an inch from each other, and had penetrated the whole length of the body as far as the hind quarters.

July 3.—In the evening, just as I am in the act of taking samples of deep-water, I am interrupted by the man in the crow's-nest (a sharp look-out for bear is always kept) informing me that there is a bear to leeward of us. Everybody wakes up at once, the samples are incontinently left, and after having glanced in the before-mentioned direction and got a glimpse of him, I rush down to the Captain and collect my things. This is soon done; the bear meanwhile has vanished behind a hummock, and after having taken our bearings for this we start off. The ice is less passable than usual, and we have to take many jumps and side routes. But there is no hurry, the most important thing just now being to keep well to windward, so that he may get our wind. Once he has scented us we may be sure he will not keep us long waiting.

At last there is only one jump more before we stand on the same floe as the bear. I jump, but alas! the crust of snow breaks beneath my feet, and I stand on my head, luckily to reach the edge of the opposite floe with my arms and part of my chest, so that I get off this time with the reminder and a pair of wet legs. The Captain gets over too, and we approach the hummock behind which it is to be hoped Bruin is still lying. Meanwhile everything is quiet, and we are almost beginning to be anxious when his head suddenly appears above the edge. Immediately we lie down flat on the ice. This we were in the habit of doing as much to arouse the bear's curiosity as to prevent him being too much impressed by our savage aspect and consequently taking himself off. He inspects us calmly with his usual annoying patience—it would be unjust to say he ever hurries himself—and then the head disappears every now and then behind the hummock just as slowly as it reappears. This promises to be a waiting game, and we have not selected the best of couches in the middle of a pool of water. At last he gets up and comes jogging along towards us,

complacently sniffing the smell of warm meat ; then he swings round broadside on, and the moment has come. The Captain fires first, then I ; the bear plunges, then rears and falls growling backwards ; a short death-rattle, and he is on his way to the happy hunting grounds.

The crew are on the spot immediately, for the whole incident has been watched with the greatest interest from mastheads and yards. The bear is hauled on board with the funeral procession due to him, and is soon skinned and portioned out, for young bear-hams are a commodity which with the bear-eating part of the crew (some of them retain their old prejudice and think bear's flesh is injurious) meets with an enthusiastic reception. The tongue and heart, especial delicacies, fall to the share of the hunters.

July 4.—We were not allowed to sleep long before a new bear was discovered in the distance, and we had to turn out. This time I again took my express rifle to make quite sure if solid bullets were really preferable to hollow ones, and Kristian, generally called the Balloon, a quick plucky fellow, was allowed to come with us. The way to-day was rougher than usual, and it took us some time before we, at a distance of fifteen hundred feet, sighted the bear, who had already smelt us, for he rose up on his hind legs to get a better view, and then went up on to a high hummock of ice, where, seating himself on his haunches, he obviously began to lay his plan of operations. We make use of the time meanwhile to get over some difficult places under cover and reach a high hummock which we thought would make a suitable waiting-place. As we draw near the edge we hold our rifles ready for any emergency. The last time we saw the bear he was advancing towards us at full speed, but when on the top we could not, to our astonishment, see him in any direction. We scanned the ice, but, although it was tolerably even, could see nothing. That the bear was in our immediate proximity we felt certain, but whereabouts was a riddle indeed. Meantime we lay down, with our rifles cocked, in order to be ready ; he might be on us before we knew where we were. Then, at a distance of fifty yards or so, in the nearest open pool, we saw a faint ripple on the water, and a dark spot appeared in sight, which slowly made its way towards us. Spite of the unusual cunning with which this was done, we at once saw that this was the bear's nose, and were now witness of a sight which was much too interesting for us to wish to put an end to it before it was

necessary. How long it lasted I cannot say, but, at any rate, over twenty minutes. The nose gradually worked its way towards us, until it was lost to sight under the edge of the floe lying nearest to us. A little while afterwards the forehead, as far as the eyes, came slowly and cautiously into sight over the edge as if to reconnoitre. Here he remained immovable for a good while, and I could plainly see how the small black eyes peered in all directions, and now and then sent a lightning glance at us.

The impression apparently was not a favourable one, for the forehead disappeared and the nose began to sail along the surface of the water again as quietly as before. Here he moved backwards and forwards for some time, while now and again the eyes appeared in sight. At last he vanished behind a hummock, and was away for some time. We began to look about, as he might have dived, when all at once the forehead and eyes became visible over the edge of the hummock, behind which he had disappeared. He must now have got up on the ice; after carefully considering us for a moment, he vanished again. This was repeated several times at long intervals; he had obviously plenty of time and meant to consider the matter well, but so had we, and found the situation far too amusing to wish to curtail it. We agreed to wait as long as possible, although the Captain complained of the ice-compress round his stomach, and the Balloon, that he had no more tobacco from which to cut himself a consolatory quid.

At last the bear seemed to have come to a conclusion. He had been away longer than usual, but now came shuffling along as large as life. First he gave an appalling yawn, and in so doing swung his tongue nearly up to his eyes. 'Oh, good morning, good morning!' exclaimed the Balloon, quite loud, and we could not help laughing, although we bade him hold his tongue. With his rolling gait, the bear now began tacking towards us, pretending the while to be unconscious of our existence. Every time he had to go about he gave another yawn and an amorous glance in our direction, but continued his journey from floe to floe, carefully trying the edges of the ice before trusting himself. In truth, he took matters with exasperating calmness. If a floe sank under him he stepped on to the next with perfect indifference and in the same lazy time as before. When tacking for the last time before reaching us, a piece of ice obstructed his path, so large that a man could hardly have turned it over, and there was plenty of room to go round, but the bear only gave it a casual slap

with one of his fore paws and sent it splashing into the water. He did it with an air as haughty as an emperor's, and exhibited a strength that was almost uncanny. The Balloon exclaimed involuntarily, 'Oh, the scoundrel!' Meanwhile the bear has headed straight for us, and is not more than ten paces away, so it is time to fire. It is my turn, and just as his hind legs are at an angle preparatory to a last spring up to us, I put a bullet right into the middle of his breast. He growls, bites, as usual, at the wound, reels over, but jumps up again, and begins to run away. The Captain then sends a ball into his hind quarters to stop him a little. My cartridge stuck fast, and only after considerable trouble did I get it loose and another one in. We are both ready again, and the bear is now in the water. As he climbs up the next ridge his back comes conveniently into sight; we both fire simultaneously, and the bullets enter between the shoulder-blades. He falls back into the water, but manages to get on to the floe again, where he is stopped by a bullet from the Captain. He falls back into the water, and, after a few gasps, everything is over.

He was an unusually large and fine bear. Although we were all three tolerably strong fellows, and the floe, which was not high, sloped down to the water's edge, we had our work cut out to get him up. We converted the Balloon's belt into a noose, which we put round his neck, but he showed remarkable ingenuity in slipping his collar; a couple of twists round his nose, however, soon put an end to this, and at length, after much vain exertion, we succeeded in hauling him up on the ice. It now proved that the first bullet had been well enough directed, but virtually had only caused an outward wound, and had torn the flesh and fat in all directions in a frightful manner, without penetrating any distance into the breast. The wound in the back from the express bullet was so large that I could put my hand in under the skin and move it about, while with a couple of fingers I could even feel the lungs; the most important wound was therefore an outward one, and consequently much less deadly than that caused by the solid bullet, which, though undoubtedly small, went right through. The Captain affirmed all the time, and I think with reason, that in the hand of a good shot a solid bullet of somewhat soft lead would certainly be the best thing for this kind of sport.

July 6.—At our nine o'clock dinner the Captain said he thought it was time for another bear. It was long since we had killed the last—two whole days. Shortly we heard a cry from

the maintop: 'Three bears to leeward!' All was life at once, ice and dietary afflictions were forgotten, and we were soon on the ice with our rifles. The Balloon was allowed to come too, and off we went in pursuit of the three, which were said to be a she-bear and two cubs. We soon caught sight of them, but so far off we could hardly distinguish them from the ice. Apparently their eyes were as good as ours, for they had already seen us; whether it was sight or scent—for the wind was good and bore right upon them—I do not know. They did not take long for consideration, however, but started off towards us as hard as they could come—the finest race imaginable. We also took up our usual position—all three in line, on our stomachs, at the top of a hummock—and watched with the greatest equanimity the race, of which we ourselves were the goal. Sometimes they divided, sometimes closed in again, according as the ice necessitated; first one led, then another; sometimes they were in the water when the lanes or pools were wider than they could jump, sometimes on the ice, but always in full career. Then one of the cubs began to get a decided lead, and was nearly within range, while the mother and the other youngster were three hundred yards behind. It got little thanks for its pains, however, for we were afraid of shooting it before the others were within gunshot. There was nothing to be done but to wait as long as possible and let matters take their chance. The care of the cub was entrusted to me, while the Captain undertook to settle the mother. The cub was already on the floe in front of us, but it never slackened speed until at about a distance of fifteen yards; then it stopped, examined us carefully, gathered itself together, and came wriggling along like a cat about to spring. It was within fifteen paces—ten, eight; my rifle was at my shoulder and my finger on the trigger. I followed every movement, glancing now and then at the she-bear to see if she would not soon be within range. The cub has come right under the barrel of the Captain's gun, and while he is wholly occupied with the mother it stops, its muscles contracted. There is no waiting any longer; there is a report. Two bullets enter its breast, and, mortally wounded, it rolls off the hummock. The mother, seeing her cub fall, presses still more wildly forward, but a bullet from the Captain's sure hand makes her bite the dust, to use a figure of speech. The cub, having staggered on to its legs again, is made an end of by a bullet through its back and into the heart. Meanwhile the Captain, with a long shot, has brought down the second cub, and the mother, having got up again, is met

by a shot from each of us, and falls, never to rise again. But now the second youngster is on its legs and is beating a retreat ; a bullet from me, however, brings it growling to the ground. It recovers itself and starts off anew, saluted by a couple of shots from me ; but, unfortunately, it is out of range now, and I shoot wide. Still I soon catch it up, and in a pool give it its *coup de grâce*.

Then it was hauled over to its two comrades which lay side by side on the ice. In truth a handsome trio, and shot in a much shorter time than it takes to tell.

July 7.—We made a bonfire of the stale meats and kept it going for several days, feeding it meanwhile with blubber ; this we did to entice the bear with the aroma of their favourite food, which if the wind be favourable they can smell many miles off. This proved successful, for during the following days no less than twenty bears were seen, though many were at a great distance. Whether they were twenty different ones it is difficult to say, and hardly probable, but at any rate it gives an idea of how numerous these animals are still in these parts.

July 8.—A bear was seen this morning, and we were called up in a hurry, but did not get him—our first failure. He was probably frightened by the noise of the scraping and cleaning in the rigging, forecastle, and funnel, which, now that the men had nothing better to do, had been taken in hand with an energy the noise of which baffles description.

But still it was interesting to see the mother's care for her young, her anxiety to make them keep up with her, and how she helped them from floe to floe, sometimes using love and sometimes severity to hasten them on.

On the same day, however, another bear was announced to leeward, the most favourable position. We started off again for the third time, I taking with me the express as an experiment. I had removed the copper tube from the bullet and inserted a solid iron plug in its place, which quite filled the hole.

The bear was so occupied in eating some seal's flesh that we came upon it unawares. When, however, it did see us, it did not hesitate long. We throw ourselves prone on the ice. He makes straight for us, till at about fifty yards' distance he stops, tricks us by jerking to one side behind a hummock, then reappears stealing along like a cat, and takes a sudden run preparatory to throwing himself upon us. It is the Captain's turn, and he sends a shot into the bear which makes him fall together without

moving. It was none too soon, for ten yards more and he would have been upon us. To our astonishment, however, he came to life again immediately, the bullets having only grazed the skull and hit the spine through the vertebrae of the neck; still, he could only use his fore-limbs. I tried a couple of my bullets and sent them straight through the breast; they seemed to act well and not to burst too soon, but I think on the whole solid bullets are to be preferred. The bear meantime was more than usually tenacious of life and would not die, before I, for want of any better article of cutlery, made my way to his heart with a pocket-knife. On the way home we discussed as usual the advisability of waiting so long before firing. One's cartridge might miss fire and the — Yes, we all agreed that it was not to be commended, promised each other as usual that it should never happen again, and that we would be more careful for the future. Still, it is easier to promise than to perform; the next time we had a bear before us all our good intentions were forgotten. We both thought the sport far too exciting and interesting to be cut short too soon.

A little while after we had returned on board a bear was again sighted to windward, but a long way off; this was the seventh to-day. As the distance was too great we did not follow it, but, after having fed the bonfire, turned in to a well-earned repose.

July 9.—To-day, at morning watch, two bears were again seen to windward, but too far off to be of any use. Later, just as we were up, another was announced, and this time not so far off but that we could see it with the naked eye. We started in pursuit, but he was going hard against the wind, and, as the Captain said, 'That fellow sails within a point of the wind, and at a pinch will go to windward of that.' At length, however, he made a halt at some seal's flesh and began a good meal, while we gained ground to windward and bore down on him. As I mentioned before, the ice was covered with this seal's flesh, which, after being skinned and the blubber removed, is left as food for sea birds, &c.—a circumstance which was of great advantage to us, as the bear will generally stop to feed at it. Probably this was the reason why there were so many bears to be seen, as the smell of the flesh would be carried by the wind far over the ice. Our bear was deeply engaged, and we came tolerably near before he caught sight of us, though to shoot an enemy which had not seen us was more than we could bring ourselves to do. But now he lifts his head and comes rocking along. We throw ourselves down on the

ice, and he, ambushed behind the hummock immediately in front of us, keeps out of sight for a while. It was now a question of having our eyes about us, for if he made his appearance at the top of the hummock he would very soon be on us. The tip of his nose soon became visible between two pieces of ice, then a bit of his chest. We both fired together, the Captain aiming at the breast, I, for a change, at the head, and my bullet entered the mouth and came out at the nape of the neck. The bear reeled over, but game to the last, and, still carrying his head high, he turned towards us. Two more shots and he fell, and then another bullet from the Captain put an end to his sufferings.

When we came on board a bear was seen about three miles off going against the wind. Some of the crew were allowed to go in pursuit, and, as was to be expected, returned without seeing anything of it at all. Scarcely had they got on board before a bear came strolling along from the very direction in which they had been. Of course they were well chaffed by the others, especially one of the shooters who came in last and was beginning to give himself airs. 'You do just the opposite to the Captain and Nansen ; instead of going after bear, the bear go after you. Why didn't you shoot him, man ?' To this there was little enough to be answered, and he restricted himself to scratching his head. Meanwhile we thanked him for decoying the bear, and started off in pursuit. A couple of the men were allowed to be of the party.

On the way I scrambled up on to a high hummock to survey the country, and discovered at a good distance the head of a bear just above a ridge of ice. It vanished from sight, and I concluded the animal must be lying there. After having taken our bearings for this we set off again and soon left the men behind us, as we preferred to be alone when we got to close quarters. The distance was diminishing, and just as we had come on to a large floe and were discussing behind which hummock it was I had last seen the bear, we discover the head not thirty paces away above the edge of an ice-ridge. As if swept over, we threw ourselves down, but he was as quick as we, and came growling towards us, showing his teeth like a tiger. There were not many seconds to spare, and as he made a little turn, we both fired simultaneously —the Captain through the breast, I through the back of the head, just behind the ear.

Well, if he had faced us bravely and voraciously, he at any rate fell better than any bear I ever saw, for he expired without a movement, and was dead almost while he stood. This must be

attributed to the shot through the back of the head, which, taken altogether, is the most deadly to all animals, and has the most instantaneous effect on the nervous system.

July 11.—The most beautiful weather this morning, with burning hot sunshine. Just as I was sunning myself on deck, in shirt-sleeves and slippers, and thinking of the summer at home in old Norway, I caught sight of a bear not far from us. I was down after the Captain in a minute, and off we went. As we stood, the bear was absorbed in the contemplation of some seal's flesh, so that we could approach him comfortably over large flat floes without his remarking us. We whistle, and at last he turns round broadside on. The Captain's gun peals forth its sharp crack, but from mine is heard first the cap, then a whizz, and at last the shot. The cartridge, a wire one, had become wet, and the ball had, of course, gone in any direction but where I wanted it to. But the Captain's bullet, which never used to fail, where was that? The bear turned and fronted us, then advanced forty paces or so and came to a standstill. I had just rammed in a new cartridge and now pulled the trigger. Again the cap is heard, again a whizz, and at last the shot; but all the same he dropped stone dead. It proved that the Captain's bullet had gone straight through both lungs and the heart, and that it was the report of my rifle only which had killed the bear, for in spite of the most careful search over the whole body no trace of any bullets was to be found. It is a remarkable proof of the polar bear's tenacity of life that after a shot so deadly it was still able to go forty paces.

This bear was killed at midday—a rare occurrence.

July 12.—In the evening I went up into the crow's-nest to sketch the coast of Greenland. First I carefully scanned the ice with the telescope to make sure there were no bear about, and then began my drawing. The men had gone to rest and everything was still; only the step of the Balloon, whose watch it was, broke the silence. I was absorbed in my work, and had almost forgotten where I was, when the Balloon, who had come up on the forecastle, suddenly shouted out, 'Why, look at the bear!' Like a flash of lightning I bounded up and looked over the side of the crow's nest: a bear was standing under the very bows of the ship. Pencil and sketchbook were thrown aside, a descent by means of one of the backstays and rigging and on to the deck was the work of a moment, and so into the cabin after rifle and

cartridges. In the doorway I met the Captain, who had also heard the Balloon's voice. We seized our rifles and started off as hard as we could go. The bear, probably frightened by the shouts of the ingenuous Balloon, had fled. When we had gone a little way we made the discovery that there were two bears; the other had been close by, and both of them were now jogging out of sight. After pursuing them some distance the Captain, who was heavily clad, gave up, but my own attire being of the lightest, a jersey and canvas shoes, I thought I would see a little more of the game, and off we went, first the bear, then I, over one great flat floe after another. But they began to get ahead of me horribly, and as repeated signals were being made from the ship for me to return, the chase had to be abandoned. Angry and crestfallen I turned my steps homeward, but promised myself that had I ever another chance of running a race with a bear I would not give in so easily.

July 14.—We had begun again to pine for bear, when in the afternoon 'a big one' was announced as being not far off. We went up to the crow's-nest to look at it, took our bearings, and started off. One of the sailors, Paul, came with us. We walked for a long time, but saw no bear, and this was the more mysterious as we thought we must long ago have arrived at the place where we had marked it from the ship. With the help of signals from the crow's-nest we at length, however, caught sight of it. We learned afterwards that it had seen us for some while and had steadily retreated. According to our usual custom, we took up our position on the summit of a hummock, for the purpose of watching our quarry. We might very well have shot then, but thought, as the bear generally came nearer, there was no hurry. Meanwhile he strolled backwards and forwards, looking at us from different points of view. Then he disappeared behind a large hummock, and when we next saw Bruin he was out of range. It was now a question of speed, and he was going at a good pace. We ran after him, covering our pursuit as well as we could; but when one is in a hurry one is apt to forget to be careful, and thus I forgot the deceptive edges of the floes, hollowed out by the water with a thin brittle crust, projecting over the surface of the pools, so that, seen from above, they seem perfectly safe and strong. We come to a broad lane of water, which, at a pinch, might be jumped, and I pull myself together for the effort; but, as luck would have it, there is just such an edge here which breaks under me, and, instead of landing on the ice, I plunge

head foremost into the water. It was rather cold, but the first thing to be thought of was my rifle. I try to throw it up on the other side, but the edge is high, it falls short of the top, and slides down again into the water; then I dive and succeed in finding it. Disgusted, I now fling it right up on the floe and swim round to a place where I can climb up and recover it. A hurried inspection of barrel and lock, and off again. The cartridges were not so important, as they were water-tight Remington ones. The Captain, meanwhile, had got ahead of me; seeing me fall into the water and having ascertained that I was able to take care of myself, he jumped over at another place and went on. Happily I was also that day very lightly clad—a jersey, canvas shoes, and no coat—so that I had not much water to carry, and it ran off almost as quickly as it came on. I was not long in making up for lost time, and when I saw the bear vanish behind a hummock, I took a short cut towards it. Just as I had reached this and was poking my head over the ridge, I was confronted by the bear. I bring my rifle to my shoulder instantly, but Bruin is quicker than I, and throws himself off the floe and into the water; the bullet only hits him in the hind quarters as he disappears.

I scramble over the crest and down to the edge to shoot him in the water, but there is no bear to be seen. Where is he? I can distinguish something white deep down in the pool, and realise the situation. But the channel was broad, and it was necessary for me to reach the other side in order to receive him there. There were two small blocks of ice in the middle of the water; it was a long jump, but I was constrained to try it. I jump, and alight comfortably on one of them. It would only just bear me, and I stagger to regain my balance, when, like a flash of lightning, the bear thrusts his head up close by the bit of ice opposite and throws himself upon it, growling. He would have had me in a minute had I not luckily forestalled him by placing a bullet in his breast, blackening the fur with the smoke. He fell into the water and expired—I was going to say in my arms; such was not quite the case, however, as I was holding him by the ears. He showed signs of sinking, which was the more curious as at this time of year the bear are generally fat and float easily. The others soon came up and helped me out of my embarrassing situation. We had nothing else to drag Bruin up with but my belt, which was little enough for the purpose. However, we fastened it round his neck and 'led' him away to a little creek in the floe. There was

now no longer any danger of his sinking, and we could haul him up by degrees. He was an unusually fine fellow, one of the largest we shot, and his skin lies under my writing-table. I can truly say that I sit with my foot on the neck of my enemy.

The distance to the ship was long, and it was some time before any of the men came to help us, so meanwhile we set to work to 'weigh him out.' This, however, I was not allowed to assist in; the Captain said I was wet and cold, and I must obey orders and return to the ship. Unreasonable as I thought this, I obeyed him, and started homewards. I had got into the habit of giving way to him, and had little reason to regret my obedience in this instance. As I neared the vessel I perceived three of the crew on the ice; two of them, as far as I could make out, were carrying rifles. I wondered where they could be going, and, upon my inquiry when I came on board, learned that they were gone after bear, but that there was no hope of my being in time, as they were already within range. Very well, I thought, I must be satisfied for to-day, and let them have the bear, but when I heard there were three of them it was too much for me. One they might have, but out of three surely I might expect one to fall to my share, and off I went as fast as my legs would carry me. I was wet before, and a little water more or less would not make much difference; besides, I need not now go round so often to avoid the pools. I soon caught the men up, and found them lying in wait for a bear which was coming towards them. I stopped at a little distance in order not to be in the way, but they, fearing I should steal a march on them, fired too soon, and only wounded the bear, which made off growling. Now it was clearly my turn. I sent him a shot in the breast which brought him down, but he got up again and fled; I gave chase, and, as he then turned and came towards me, put a bullet through his head which ended his life.

We had now to think about the next one. Signals were made from the ship, and we took the direction pointed out to us, and soon caught sight of the bear, which was standing eating some seal's flesh, so occupied with his meal that, unperceived, we were able to get within easy range. As I was not sure of the others, I thought it better to shoot from here, and whistled to make him look up; but no. Then I tried again with no better result, then a third time as loud as I could, and he lifts his head. I aimed behind the shoulder, and let blaze, and the other two fired simultaneously. The bear growled and reeled backwards into the water. I rushed to the edge, but, as I thought he had got enough, let him quietly swim over to the other side, intending

when he had got up on the ice to give him his quietus, thus saving ourselves the trouble of hauling him up. But this time I reckoned without my host, for he took care to land under cover of a large hummock, climbed as lithe as a cat up on the ice, and away he went. I stood with a long face, and only achieved a useless bullet in the hind quarters; but then began a race which was ample compensation for all the disappointment suffered. Oluf, who had no rifle, and was only carrying an ice-axe and a rope, followed a little way, but came to a standstill at the first piece of water that was too broad to jump. I, who had no intention of going round, took to the water. I heard a guffaw behind me; it was Oluf, who had never seen anybody get over a pool in that way before, and, meaning to manage things better himself, he, with the ice-axe, guided a floe into the middle of the water, intending to jump on it, and from thence make a second spring to the other side. But now it was my turn to laugh. He managed to land on the edge in such a way that he fell into the water up to his middle, and of course his high sea-boots filled immediately. Then followed such an emptying of boots as I, with my light canvas shoes, had no need of, and consequently no time for. The bear and I apparently were going to measure our speed alone, and both of us were resolved to do our utmost. He ran for life, I for honour. My bullet had undoubtedly hit him behind the shoulder, but by mistake I had got hold of a cartridge containing hollow bullets, which had only caused an outward wound, and did not seem to hinder him much. A good deal of blood was flowing from it, and the track was therefore easy to find. The bullets of the other men had not hit him. Meanwhile we tore over the ice as fast as our legs would carry us; sometimes I gained on the bear, sometimes he made head against me. Thus we continued from floe to floe; if the pools were too wide to jump, I swam them—there was no time to think of going round now. Mile after mile we went, and the bear showed no signs of giving in, but at last he began to make turns, and I took advantage of this to cut across, and thus gained on him considerably. I understood now that he was beginning to grow tired, and was taking it easier, until I saw him disappear behind a hummock. Covered by this I put on a spurt in hopes of getting a shot at him, but no, he saw through my device and renewed his exertions. He went a little further, and then slackened speed. I at last came within range, and sent a bullet through the breast; he made a couple of bounds in the air and fell. A shot behind the ear ended his career.

All very well, but here I was, alone with a dead bear! A rifle without cartridges and a penknife my only weapons! The Captain had kept my large knife for the purpose of 'weighing out' the bear. The first thing to be thought of, therefore, was to make signs to the ship, but nothing was to be seen of it except the masts. I mounted the highest hummock near at hand, and from thence waved my cap, disposed on the end of my gun-barrel. I then descended and set to work on the bear with my penknife with the intention of at least saving the skin. It was slow work, as the head and feet had to be cut through in order not to detach them from the skin, but with care and patience I was able to do it, and had nearly finished when I heard a voice in the distance. I went up on to a crag of ice to see, and it proved to be Oluf, who, after his transit over the floes, had at last caught me up. He was unfeignedly delighted to see me, for he had run all the way, with his heart in his mouth, for fear of—meeting the bear! His only means of defence were an axe and a packet of cartridges. We finished the skinning and then began our not very easy task of dragging it homewards, for, with its accompanying layer of fat, a skin like this may weigh as much as 200 pounds.

Oluf and I, who thought we had done enough, then left them and went on. On the way home Oluf had a great deal to say about my method of crossing pools, which was quite new to him, and the scene when he was left behind with his boots seemed to have made an indelible impression on his memory. We had not gone far before we met an embassy from the Captain bringing us beer and something to eat. I was quite touched at this kindness, and can safely say that both Oluf and I did ample justice to the fare. When I came on board I heard that the third bear had been close at hand, but had now moved off. We ought to have had that too, and so made up the score; as it was, we had to be satisfied with only nineteen.

That was our last hunt; a few days afterwards the ice gave, and we got out. The sealing season was now over, and we had nothing to do but to set our course homewards. Lightly the *Viking* sped over the waves, as fast as wind and steam could carry her, and great was the joy on board when the weather-beaten peaks of dear old Norway appeared in sight rising from the sea.¹

FRIDTJOF NANSEN.

¹ This paper, which is somewhat condensed in the translation, was written in a popular form as a contribution to a Norwegian sporting newspaper at that time of small circulation. It appeared in 1883, Dr. Nansen being then 21 years old.

The Haunted House.

THE plain old face, whose weather-stains,
 Of summer suns, and winter rains,
 Are known by heart :
 The scene of unforgotten days,
 Before life's stern dividing ways
 Bore us apart :—

Where no unhallowed shadow falls
 Upon the gray old homely walls,
 To cross the door ;
 No spectre, but the living speech
 Of hearts that answered each to each,
 And can—no more ;—

Not any phantom, yoked with pain,
 Re-visitant of earth again,
 Belongs to thee,
 But just the paths we lovers trod,
 Given to each other, and to God
 In years to be.

And only lingering echoes meet
 Of vanished friends, whose welcome feet
 Passed in and out ;
 Of gentle laughter, free and long,
 Of busy life, and frequent song,
 And childish shout.

Within : the long low rooms all bare
 A living spirit seems to share,
 No idle ghost ;
 Where once there sat, in brave array,
 The children,—that are since grown gray,—
 With Love for host.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

This is my haunted house ; the spot
Where lived the Once that now Is Not,

Despite our tears :

Old merriment, and placid days,
Old pain and loss—dear blame, sweet praise,
Spent joys and fears.

And nowhere in the wide fair earth
Does any garden bring to birth

Such flowers as those :

The myriad crocus of the spring,
The orchard's snowy blossoming,
The countless rose.

Still green about that silent door,
The years awake for evermore

In pensive shade ;

Just as when father, mother, child,
The long bright summer eve beguiled
With music made—

Music that floated out to air
Through open windows, down the stair,

As gloaming fell :

Until a thousand birds were still,
And moonlight rose behind the hill,
—And all was well.

I do not crave to see thy state,
Dear haunted Home,—all desolate,—

Perhaps laid low :

But only ask thy heart to keep
For those who wake,—and those who sleep,—
The love we know.

And if in heaven there be a glade
Sweet as thy trees and sunshine made,

As green,—the same,—

I pray that God may lead us there
To learn in love, without despair,
His other Name.

MARY R. L. BRYCE.

The Ticking of the Clock.

BY MRS. ALFRED BALDWIN, AUTHOR OF 'THE STORY OF A MARRIAGE,' 'WHERE TOWN AND COUNTRY MEET,' &c.

ELIJAH WALROND, or Old 'Lijah as he was commonly called, was a small tenant farmer, who, by dint of hard work, hard living, and saving, had contrived to lay by enough money to make a frugal provision for his old age. 'Lijah's wife died the year before he quitted the farm that had been their home for forty years, and when he lost her it was like losing a part of himself. He was never the same man again. It took the heart out of his work when there was no wife to talk it over with ; he could not relish the food prepared by a strange hand, and he lay awake at nights in his loneliness, staring into the darkness with tearless eyes. There was nothing left to make life sweet to him, and his seventy years weighed on him like a hundred. Then he asked his landlord to let him off the short remainder of his lease, and he left the farm to live in the white cottage with the big garden down by the common.

His neighbours said that Old 'Lijah would go silly with loneliness all by himself, for he saw nobody and spoke to no one but the woman who came to clean and to do his bit of cooking. He seldom left the house, and never went beyond the garden, and he had not entered the church since the day of his wife's funeral. The rector of the parish, who had known Elijah Walrond many years, called to ask him why he never saw him in his accustomed place on a Sunday, but the old man would only reply, 'I canna do it, sir ; I canna do it ! 'Er'd used to go to church with me, and I canna go alone,' and lapse into silence again. There was no one at home now to care what he did, or whether he was well or ill, so he ceased to strive against stiffness and rheumatism, and crept along with the help of a stick, with bowed shoulders, as though he carried a heavy burden. Old 'Lijah was in a parlous

state, both of body and mind, when one day the very best thing that could happen befell him, though it came about through someone else's sorrow.

'Lijah had an only child—a daughter—who some years previously had married a ne'er-do-well of the name of Grove, and lived with him in the north of England, where, after a short career of idleness and poverty, he died, leaving Jane a widow with one little child. Jane Grove had not a farthing in the world to call her own when she had paid her fare to travel southwards to her father, and her sticks of furniture had been sold to pay for her husband's burial, for her honest pride revolted at a pauper's funeral. She knew that her father had left the farm, but in however poor a place he lived now, he would not shut the door upon his daughter, though he had been displeased with her for marrying as she did. But bygones were bygones, and though the mother, who would have welcomed her child, was dead, Jane could cook and work for her father, and make the meanest place seem like home; and good as her intentions were towards the old man, she could not tell—no one could have told—the kindness she was about to do him.

Jane Grove reached her father's cottage in the grey of a summer evening, weary and footsore with her long walk from the station, carrying her sleeping child in her arms. She inquired from a man whom she met crossing the common where Elijah Walrond lived, and he pointed out to her the little white cottage with the big garden. Slowly she walked up the long, narrow path, with its straggling border of sweet-smelling pinks, wondering that the place was so untidy and ill-kept, till she stood on the threshold of the half-opened door. She tapped timidly, and no one replying to her knock, she looked into the kitchen, and there sat her father dozing in his chair by the chimney corner. She was shocked at the change in his appearance. His features were sharp and worn, his hands like birds' claws, and a ragged growth of white beard and moustache covered his once well-shaven face; nor was old 'Lijah as clean as he might have been. His stockings were in holes and his clothes ragged and unmended. It was plain to be seen that he had lost all interest in himself, and that there was no woman to look after him. Jane entered, and quietly seated herself opposite to her father, and her tears fell fast as she took in the meaning of his forlorn and neglected aspect, and whispered to herself, 'Oh, mother, mother!'

When 'Lijah opened his eyes, there sat his daughter on the

other side of the hearth, nursing a child on her lap. At first he did not know who it was, and looked vaguely puzzled until he heard her voice.

‘It’s me, father; it’s Jane come to live with you and make you comfortable.’

He did not seem startled, and received the announcement with the most matter-of-fact calm.

‘Whatever brings you back i’ these parts? It’s trouble, I doubt,’ and the old man shook a boding head.

‘Aye, father, trouble enough it is! My man’s dead, and I ‘aven’t a penny in the world and no home but what you’ll give me and this little lad to keep,’ and the child, now wide awake, sat up on her lap and looked about him.

‘What’s that you say about a little lad? You’ve got a little lad to keep?’ and there was a strange stir in the old man’s heart as he uttered the words, for he had never had a son of his own, and it had been the great disappointment of his life.

For reply Jane crossed the hearth with her child in her arms, and set him on the old man’s shrunken knees—as beautiful a boy of twelve months old as a mother ever doted on.

‘Yes, father, that’s my little lad as I’ve got to keep; that’s little Peter, your own little grandson; and he’s rare good company a’ready for lonely folks. Many’s the time he’s dried my tears watching ‘is pretty ways. ‘Old ‘im tight, father, for ‘e isn’t used to old folks, and p’raps ‘e mayn’t take to you.’

No need to tell ‘Lijah to hold his little grandson carefully. The touch of the child’s firm young flesh, the sight of his golden hair in lamb-like curls, his gentian-blue eyes and moist, innocent breath nourished his old bones, and he felt there was vital warmth in him yet. And when little Peter put up a dimpled hand to grasp his ragged beard, and made pretty baby jabbering, and laughed in his troubled old face, displaying four pearly-white teeth like grains of rice, the frost in the grandfather’s heart, that had bound it since his wife died, melted, and he said :

‘Jane, if you ‘aven’t got a penny in the world, your man’s left you rich enough wi’ a little lad like this! You must bide wi’ me—both of you.’

‘Aye, father, so we will. But look you how that grey wire beard o’ yourn is scratchin’ little Peter’s face! You’ll ‘ave to shave it off, and poor mother always thought so much o’ your clean chin! ’

The ragged beard was duly taken off, and the old man began

the trouble of shaving again, and renewed his acquaintance with soap and water, for the little lad's sake ; and his daughter washed and mended his clothes, and 'Lijah looked once more himself, but old—very old.

'Lijah's whole heart was garnered up in his little grandson, and as the boy grew older it was a pretty sight to see them in the fields together, the child bringing wild flowers to the old man to name, or a bird's egg or nest ; but whatever it was he could tell him everything about it, and nothing short of that would content little Peter. For he had a healthy child's thirst for every kind of knowledge, so long as it was not what schoolmasters teach or what comes out of a book, and he was eager after all country lore and old-world word-of-mouth wisdom. It was wonderful how much the little lad learnt from his grandfather about four-footed creatures, from oxen to stoats and weasels, and he could have passed an examination with honours in the names, songs, and plumage of British birds.

The two were inseparable companions, and Peter would rather play with his grandfather, whom he regarded as an overgrown child with bent back and stiff legs, than with any little boy of his own age.

Jane Grove would stand on the doorstep and smile as she watched her father and his little grandson set out for a walk hand in hand, perfectly happy and content together. 'They're more like a pair o' lovers, them two, than anything else ! Father's like wrapped up in that lad, and don't think o' me exceptin' to eat the vittles I cook and set afore 'im ; nor little Peter, 'e don't think o' me neither so long as 'e can 'ave 'is grandad ! They're both of 'em civil to me, and that's about all they are, they're so took up with each other.'

When little Peter had stuck to his grandfather like his shadow for five years, he began to be aware that his beloved companion could not see very far, and was shaky on his legs, got tired before they were half across the common, had a habit of falling asleep in the midst of the most interesting conversation about rooks and water rats, and was growing deaf, so that he had to speak loud to make him hear. These things grieved little Peter, and as he could not see the necessity for them he asked his grandfather what he did them for.

'Grandad,' he said, as he walked slowly by his side, having hold of his hand, 'grandad, why don't you run as quick as me ?'

The old man¹ smiled delightedly at a question that seemed to him to display little Peter's immense intellectual powers.

'It's seventy 'ears too late, my little lad, for grandfather to go running about like a little dog at a fair.'

'But, grandfather, you know a deal more than me ; you'd ought to know how to run ever so fast, and climb the bank and gather blackberries same as me.'

'Aye, so I did when I was your age, but blackberries was bigger then than what they are now. They was worth climbing for seventy 'ears ago, I can tell you ! But I'm an old man now, Peter,' and 'Lijah looked down on the child's upturned face that was fresh and clear as a flower.

Little Peter walked on a few paces in thoughtful silence. 'But, grandfather, what makes you such an old, old man ?' And 'Lijah laughed with delight at the question. Oh, Peter was a rare deep little chap, he'd get to the bottom of everything if he could.

'It's nothing but Anna Dominoes as makes me such a' old, old man, and that's Latin for the 'ear of the Lord. It's Anna Dominoes, that's the matter wi' me, little Peter, and nothin' else,' and the child stored up the mysterious words in his tenacious memory.

Not long afterwards Old 'Lijah, who had grown neighbourly again now that he was happy, went one evening, accompanied by his grandson, to spend an hour with his old friend, Farmer Blewitt. The two old men were seated in arm-chairs at each side of the table, with a tobacco jar and cider mugs, and a small narrow box before them. Little Peter was lying on the hearth playing with a young spaniel puppy, in whose delightful society he was wholly absorbed, till he heard Farmer Blewitt say :

'Let's have a game o' dominoes, 'Lijah ; it's many a day since you and me played together.'

Little Peter sat up.

'I don't mind if I do play a game,' said his grandfather.

Little Peter rose to his feet, pushed the frivolous and seductive puppy aside as being likely to interfere with serious business, and modestly, but firmly, approached the table where the old men were beginning their game. He laid his hand on his grandfather's arm, but he did not feel it at first, so he pressed harder.

'Hallo ! little chap, what's up ?'

'Don't touch none o' them dominoes, grandfather ! Don't touch 'em,' said little Peter urgently.

'Whatever's to do with you, Peter ? You're unreasonable !'

said 'Lijah, with as near an approach to asperity as was possible towards his little grandson.

But Peter was not to be daunted. 'Grandfather, don't you remember that day when I asked what made you such an old, old man, you said it was Anna Dominoes as did it all? Don't touch 'em, grandfather, don't touch one of 'em!' and Peter's young face was full of anxiety.

Old 'Lijah and Farmer Blewitt laughed till they cried, while 'Lijah told him what he had said to the little chap in the lane about his age; 'for he's that peart, I said Anna Dominoes was the matter wi' me, speaking Latin, and Latin or Greek he'll get to the reason o' things! No, little Peter, these ain't the kind o' dominoes that's made an old, old man o' your grandad; it was the 'ear of the Lord I was speaking on, and when you go to school you'll learn all about un!'

Peter was now an active little slip of seven years of age, never still except when he was sleeping, and not knowing what it was to be tired. He had grown used to his grandfather's increasing infirmities by now, but they irked his restless young body and spirit, and on their walks together, when the old man sat down by the way weary and breathless, little Peter beguiled the time running to and fro as fast as he could, to let off his pent-up energy, after crawling at a snail's pace by old 'Lijah's side.

A few weeks later and little Peter again returned with a child's persistence to the puzzling subject of his grandfather's decaying strength.

'Grandfather, if it isn't the dominoes that does it, do tell me what it is that makes you such an old, old man!'

Old 'Lijah did not laugh at the boy's question now. He felt his life feeble within him, and he did not know what to say in reply that could be intelligible to a child. They were alone in the kitchen, and no sound was heard but the loud ticking of the tall clock, the audible footstep of time. The old man looked into the child's fresh young face as he stood between his knees waiting for an answer, and he smiled feebly, and pressed the firm round cheek with his shaking hand, but he said nothing.

'But what is it, grandfather, that makes you such an old, very old man?'

Then 'Lijah looked up at the tall clock whose loud tick tack penetrated his dull hearing, and it seemed to him as though he had heard it for eighty years, counting out aloud the minutes, hours, days, and years of his whole life.

'It's the ticking of the clock, my little lad, the ticking of the clock, that makes grandfather such an old, old man ;' and Peter was satisfied with the reply, and set his young brains to work to find out how he could baffle the evil influence of the clock.

Now the tall case clock was a very big person for a small boy to tackle. He stood six feet without his shoes, with a huge round face behind a pane of glass, and a long front door opening straight into his vitals, and Peter had peeped in on winding-up days, and seen two heavy weights hanging, and the shining brass pendulum swinging to and fro, whose everlasting tick tack had made an old man of his grandfather. Well, never mind, wait till some time when mother was out of the house, and grandfather asleep in the big arm-chair, as he was nearly all day long now, and little Peter knew what he would do !

Not many days afterwards everything happened as Peter wished, and he looked out of the window to make sure that his mother was at a safe distance at the top of the garden, and there she was, standing with her back to the house, busy pegging clothes on the line, so that no danger need be feared from that quarter. Indoors, too, all was equally favourable to the carrying out of little Peter's deep-laid scheme. Grandfather really was older than ever to-day. He had not stirred from the big chair since he came down in the morning, and when he was spoken to he said nothing, he only smiled and fell into a doze. He was fast asleep now, and little Peter's heart beat with joy to think what a fine surprise he was preparing for his grandfather. What would the old man think when he felt the stiffness and trembling going out of his legs and back, his eyes growing clear and bright again, and his deafness leaving him ? all which would be sure to happen if the clock would only stop ticking.

Grandfather was so fast asleep, with his head leaning forward on his breast, that little Peter was not afraid of waking him. He summoned all his courage to his aid and stepped cautiously up to the great clock, with its menacing tick tack, unlocked its front door, opened it wide, and peeped into the resonant cavern in its inside, with the heavy iron weights hanging and the bright brass pendulum swaying to and fro with its everlasting tick tack, tick tack. Then, without giving himself time to take fright at his own daring, he seized hold of the swinging pendulum and, after a brief struggle, held it in his hand, a silent, motionless thing.

Then little Peter loosed his hold, and glanced over his shoulder at the old man, but he was still quietly sleeping. He cautiously

closed the door of the tall clock towering above him in silence, and seated himself on a stool at his grandfather's feet, waiting to tell him when he awoke how he had stopped the ticking of the clock that made him such an old, old man.

There his mother found him sitting when she returned from the garden, and neither daughter nor grandson could rouse the old man from the sleep that knows no waking. When the pendulum was set swinging once more, the clock began to tick again as though nothing had happened, and it ticked out the minutes till they grew into years, and little Peter became big Peter, and then he understood what his grandfather had meant.

Chamois Hunting above the Snow Line.

AROUND the chamois and the chase thereof there has ever hung somewhat of mystery and romance. Of the animal itself and its habits less is known than of many antelopes in the wilds of Central Africa. Not a few people are sceptical of its very existence, believing that constant persecution brought about the extinction of the species in the Alps years ago. Only the other day a gentleman, hearing I had been out chamois hunting, asked me if the sport was a 'really genuine thing,' and not, as he evidently imagined, a mere pantomimic pretence. It seems strange, this ignorance concerning a creature who lives so close to our doors, and with whose haunts so many of us become familiar on our holiday ramblings. The literature on the subject is, moreover, of the scantiest, even in these days of the promiscuous making of books. In some of the older works that I have come across it is treated in a somewhat high-flown, hyperbolical fashion, that would offend the taste, and make too large a demand on the credulity, of our more discriminating generation. Marvellous tales are told of the habits, the agility, and the wariness of the game. The chamois is represented as attaining to a fabulous age, notwithstanding certain strange suicidal propensities which are set forth with amusing gravity and an air of the most perfect substantiality.

As might be expected, however, it is with the chamois hunter himself, and the fearful perils which environ him, that these legendary fragments are principally concerned. The chase of the chamois, we are told, is 'the most dangerous of all.' The hunter is represented as being 'familiar with places where an ordinary man would fear to venture—accustomed to have Death stalking beside him as a companion and to meet him face to face.' He goes forth alone to confront the terrors of the mountains, for none can be found daring enough to accompany him. His very countenance betokens the gruesome nature of his

occupation, as the following description of the typical *Jäger* testifies. I take it from Mr. Charles Boner's work on *Chamois Hunting in Bavaria* :—‘Tall, gaunt, and bony; his brown and sinewy knees were bare, scratched, and scarred; his beard was black and long, his hair shaggy, and hunger was in his face. The whole man looked as if he had just escaped from the den of a wolf, where he had been starved and in daily expectation of being eaten. But it was his eyes—it was the wild, staring fixedness of his eyes—that kept mine gazing on him. The bent eagle nose, the high fleshless cheek-bones, added to their power. There was no fierceness in them, nor were they greedy eyes; but they were those of a man who had been snatched from a horrible death, in whom the recollection was not yet effaced, nor was ever likely to be. They were always wide open; the whole creature seemed vigilant, and awaiting at any moment to have a wrestle with Fate. . . . Had he told me that, Prometheus-like, he had been chained to a glacier for a whole winter, amid the icy world of the mountain-top, exposed to the rain and the tempests of the dreary darkness, I could almost have believed his words, so in unison were his features and his whole appearance with such a tale.’

Such a man is the traditional pursuer of the Alpine antelope, the *Gemsjäger* of transpontine melodrama, so to speak. On the other hand, lest the modern *chasseur* should feel unduly puffed up by these fantastic sketches of his brethren of the chase, we learn from another writer that the chamois hunter is ‘generally a rude, uncultivated being,’ whose society is even less attractive than his personal appearance. Only on one point do the older writers seem in perfect agreement, and that is that the *Jäger* is a very remarkable person, and that the sport itself abounds with excitement and adventure of the most thrilling kind.

I fear that the humble individual who is now addressing you, dear reader, can make no such claim on your attention. He will be compelled to strip the sport of much of the glamour with which it is habitually invested. If not, as he trusts, ‘a rude, uncultivated being,’ neither is he the reckless desperado depicted in the extracts cited above. His favourite amusement is exciting beyond question, and not entirely free from danger, but it is certainly not of the blood-curdling character which other authors have attributed to it. Whence, then, this divergence in our impressions of the sport? The explanation cannot be found in

the nature of the ground traversed, for chamois hunting in the high Alps is certainly a much more arduous and risky pursuit than in the lower mountains of the Tyrol or Bavaria, where my predecessors in the literature of the chase familiarised themselves with it. Perhaps it is that we live nowadays in a more prosaic—dare I say a more truthful?—age. We have lost our illusions, and that terrible modern spirit of analysis has shattered our imaginative faculties, and compels us to be so horribly literal and veracious. The mountains, too, have been largely shorn of the mystery that formerly enshrouded them, and with the mystery has vanished much of the awe and reverence they used to inspire. It is Mr. Ruskin, if I mistake not, who reproaches us climbers with treating the Alps as so many greased poles. I do not for a moment admit the impeachment, as it is quite possible to appreciate the athletic together with the artistic aspects of mountaineering. Unquestionably, however, with the high development of this noble art of 'greased poling,' places that struck the earlier climbers as being desperately difficult our latter-day Alpinists regard as perfectly easy. These are some of the principal reasons for the undoubted fact that the mountains have now in great measure lost their terrors, though for those who truly love them their charm must for ever remain undiminished. How much that charm is enhanced when there is added thereto the fascination of a deeply interesting sport like chamois hunting it will be my endeavour to show.

'Of all the various forms of stalking which I have tried, none, in my opinion, will bear comparison with the chase of the chamois.' So says Mr. Edward North Buxton in his delightful book, *Short Stalks*. This is high praise from so keen and true a sportsman, who has shot big game of many kinds, and in four continents, at intervals during the last twenty years. Nevertheless I do not think he can have hunted chamois under the most interesting conditions. At least I gather so much when he describes the sport as not being a very arduous one and comparatively free from mountaineering difficulties. If the older writers erred, as they undoubtedly did, in exaggerating the difficulties and dangers of the chase, Mr. Buxton, as I think, goes too far in the opposite direction by minimising them unduly. He does our favourite pastime less than justice. Undoubtedly the phases and methods of chamois hunting are very various. First, there is the *battue* system, when the guns are posted in well-known passages and the game driven up to them by beaters. This is, of

course, devoid of danger, but scarcely more exciting than roe-deer shooting in Scotland. Secondly, they may be stalked in the lower mountains, such as those of the Bavarian highlands or parts of the Tyrol, and this, I take it, is the kind of sport Mr. Buxton is describing. Here you are within the limits of the trees, and the chamois are usually found in thickets of fir scrub or covert of some sort. Lastly, there is hunting on the slopes and outlying buttresses of the central Alpine ranges, where, amid the glory and sublimity of the eternal snows and glaciers, the amateur hunter will find plenty of hard work and, if he wishes it, abundant scope for whetting his appetite for adventure. At least that has been my experience when, coming straight from a month's climbing and rock gymnastics on the Chamonix aiguilles, I have finished up my season with a week's or ten days' hunting. I do not mean to say that one encounters difficulties such as those upon the Petit Dru or the Charmoz, to say nothing of those more desperate climbs which are now successfully undertaken by guideless parties, and which so needlessly scandalise mountaineers of the more old-fashioned and orthodox type. But rock-scrambling enough to satisfy ordinary tastes will be encountered, and—*pace* Mr. Buxton, who says that 'one seldom has any ice work in chamois hunting'—plenty of glacier walking and an almost daily exercise of ice-craft, including therein the use of the axe. The mountains themselves may be easy enough, but the exigencies of the stalk will force you at times into troublesome places. It must also be remembered that you are encumbered with a rifle, that the excitement of the chase is apt to make you careless or over-venturesome, and that you are deprived of the moral and physical support of the rope. Speaking for myself, I must say that I have felt more concerned for my personal safety on various occasions out hunting than I have ever been when engaged in regular mountaineering. I always avoid difficult places if I can, for the sport by no means depends on 'greased-poling' for its charm; on the other hand, I think that amateurs should know beforehand that chamois hunting, in the high Alps at any rate, must of necessity entail a certain amount of risk.

But this exordium is becoming unduly prolonged. It is time I came to my subject. My chief difficulty is to know where to begin, which to select of the many delightful days' sport I have had in different parts of Switzerland, North Italy, and Savoy. Perhaps I cannot do better than make my way straight to my happy hunting-grounds on the southern slopes of the central

Pennine Alps. My starting-point was, as usual, the Valtornanche, which, as all mountaineers know, runs up from the Aosta valley to the base of the mighty Matterhorn. Leaving Breuil early one morning, we—that is, myself and my faithful hunter and guide, Jean Baptiste Perruquet, of Crépin, near the village of Valtornanche—scrambled to the top of the Punta Fontanella, in quest of chamois. Three were sighted on some precipices half a mile off, but nothing could be done with them; so, traversing the much-crevassed and (for chamois hunters) troublesome Col de la Bella Za (10,000 feet), we descended into the picturesque Valpelline. At the head of this valley, amid a whole host of lofty, glacier-clad peaks, lie the chalets of Prérayen, whose master, rich in innumerable flocks and herds, affords ready, if somewhat rough, hospitality to passing mountaineers. We spent the night under his roof, intending to make an early start next morning.

At 5 A.M. Perruquet and I sallied forth up one of the lateral valleys which trend in a southerly direction and at right angles to the Valpelline. Crossing a wooden bridge which spans the gorge carved out by the impetuosity of the torrent, we entered a charming green glade in a forest of larches. These trees seem in the majority of the northern Italian valleys to have entirely dispossessed the ordinary Alpine fir. We passed their limits at an elevation of between seven and eight thousand feet, and commenced painfully toiling up a wilderness of loose stones and fallen boulders towards the Val Cornera Pass. I was not surprised to learn from Perruquet that among the guides and hunters of Valtornanche the Val Cornera has an evil reputation for being the most fatiguing and generally disagreeable pass in the district. Nor was the weather entirely propitious. There had lately been a sudden and almost unprecedented fall in the temperature. A bitter north wind nipped our ears and noses, and drove the particles of hoar frost from the rocks into our eyes, while light showers of hail and snow kept steadily falling. The mountains seemed almost sheeted in ice, and presented a wintry aspect such as I had never seen before so early in the season. The smaller waterfalls were all frozen, and huge icicles, twenty to thirty feet long, and pendent masses of congealed snow and water festooned the adjoining cliffs, and threatened in places to topple on our heads. Our route presented few climbing difficulties, but the *verglas* on the rocks and the steep slopes of frozen earth made it necessary to pay heed to one's going in order to avoid unpleasant *croppers*.

A doe and two kids were presently descried on a moraine, and others were not long in putting in an appearance. But they had already become aware of our presence, and, though not greatly alarmed, they all made off. We followed their tracks, and soon our labours were rewarded by the sight of a herd of about twenty chamois on a corner of the glacier, where they evidently felt themselves secure from molestation. They were congregated at the foot of a steep and impassable icefall, whose *séracs*, or pinnacles of ice, rose in picturesque confusion from the crevasses at their base. In the background the mountains towered to a height of over 11,000 feet in a series of lofty and inaccessible precipices. There being nothing else to do, we sat down and observed the animals for an hour or so, and truly I know few things more diverting than watching a herd of chamois at play on a glacier. The elderly bucks and does lay down, or else walked about with slow and dignified steps, while the kids hopped and skipped about and chased each other over the snow and generally performed the most absurd antics. Now one would stand on his hind legs and butt at the others like a goat, then he would run off and rush round and round in a circle like a thing possessed. Occasionally a mamma chamois would administer a friendly dig in the ribs to her over-active offspring, as much as to say, 'You really must behave yourself, my dear,' whereat the kid would frisk and gambol more madly than ever. The general effect of the *Gemsespel* at that distance reminded one of a troupe of imperfectly educated fleas performing on a white linen sheet.

After a while, as afternoon came on, the lady leader of the herd (with chamois, as with red deer, it is always a female who acts as guide) seemed to think it was getting time for dinner, and, to our exceeding joy, commenced moving slowly in our direction. There was coarse grass growing on the ledges of rock here and there, and we had little doubt that they would make their way thither to feed. As soon as the last laggard of the band was hidden from our view by the cliffs which descended abruptly below us to the glacier, we stole cautiously forward to meet them. The rocks were rather steep and water-worn, and here and there I was glad of a helping hand. One or two impassable gullies had to be turned, and we were obliged to tread very gingerly in order to avoid making a noise by rolling down stones. I was not entirely successful in this latter respect, but fortunately chamois are less easily frightened by noises than are deer in Scotland. In the loftier Alpine regions their ears are continually being saluted by

the thunder of the mountain artillery, the din and clatter of avalanches and falling stones, and masses of ice crashing into the frozen gulfs below—to say nothing of the never-ceasing murmur of torrent and waterfall. Hence the kicking down of a stone or two is not a matter of much moment, except that it may serve to attract the chamois' attention to the hunter, especially towards the end of a stalk. It is fortunate that this is so; otherwise, owing to the difficulty of the ground, successful stalks above the snow line would be rare indeed.

Speaking generally, I am inclined to think that the chamois is not the preternaturally wary beast he is usually represented to be. Of his comparative indifference to noises, as long as they are not too loud, I have already spoken. Nor, in my opinion, is his eyesight anything remarkable. Judging from his failure to distinguish objects, such as a man's head or hand, as long as they are motionless, I should say that the organs of vision of chamois are scarcely more acute than those of human beings. On the other hand, their sense of smell is quite extraordinary; hence the wind is by far the worst enemy of the hunter. The shifting eddies and currents, blowing now this way, now that, now up hill, now down, multiply tenfold the chances in favour of the game. I have often asked friends of mine who have hunted in various countries as to the distance at which deer and other wild animals can scent a human being, and most of them seem to be agreed that they will wind you more than a mile off. I have certainly seen chamois over half a mile distant make off in alarm when they could not possibly have seen anything to disturb them. It is curious, too, how much more the hunter's odour seems to terrify them than the mere sight of him. In the latter case, unless you are quite close, they whistle and move off quietly, turning round every few hundred yards to look; while if they get your scent they will throw up their heads with an expression of utter disgust that is highly diverting, and, without hesitating a moment, gallop away at top speed.

The present stalk gave me an excellent opportunity of testing the chamois' power—or want of power—of vision. Peering over the edge of a rock, I saw the head of a buck who was staring intently at me about ninety yards off. I could only see his head and shoulders, while half of my face and the whole of a broad-brimmed felt hat were exposed to his view. It surprised me greatly that he did not bolt immediately; but he was evidently, like most of his species, of an inquisitive turn of mind, and wanted

to make out what the unknown object was. We were near enough for me to distinguish his bold, characteristic features—the erect head with its curved horns and slender, pointed ears, and the yellow jowl with the longitudinal black stripe. Meanwhile I remained perfectly still, not daring so much as to wink, and, strangely enough, he seemed quite unable to make me out. In this way we stared fixedly at each other for about two minutes, until, his curiosity being apparently satisfied, he lowered his head and began grazing tranquilly. I promptly bobbed out of sight, and, placing my rifle in position, waited for him to emerge from his hiding-place. But, our attention being thus riveted by the chamois in front, we did not notice the remainder of the band, who, unobserved by either of us, had mounted the rocks below us on our right. Generally the chamois heralds his approach by kicking down showers of stones. On the present occasion their footfall was light and noiseless as a cat's, and the 'lady guide' at once sighted us and gave the alarm. Immediately there was a general *sauve qui peut*. Scattering in all directions, they scampered off, leaping up high rocks and clearing wide chasms in the extremity of their terror. I hastily cocked my rifle and rushed forward to a stone where I could get a good sight of them, but their numbers and the suddenness of their approach had flustered me a bit, and the result was that I fired four shots in rapid succession, and—missed them all !

Perruquet spoke never a word, but looked at me more in sorrow than in anger, his feelings being evidently too deep for speech. The faces of my men were always a study after an unsuccessful stalk. To them a miss meant the blighting of fair hopes of a good square meal such as they seldom enjoyed, the dissipating of bright visions of savoury meat such as their souls truly loved. Our fare at Prérayen was of the poorest, and, as we chiefly depended on our rifles for animal food, any game was a welcome addition to our larder. The knowledge that no chamois meant no meat for dinner undoubtedly gave a keener zest to the sport, but it also aggravated the mortification of failure.

With heavy hearts and lagging footsteps we began our tramp up the loose shale slopes of the Val Cornera. If we had killed a chamois we should have thought nothing of the climb. Perruquet would have waltzed off with the carcass, whilst I should have shouldered the *rucksack*, telescope, and rifle ; and fatigue, difficulties, and dangers, had there been any such, would have vanished into thin air. All this shows, to my mind, that fatigue is very

much more largely a mental affair than most people imagine. As long as you are pleased with yourself you never feel tired, while if you are depressed or frightened, or in other ways down on your luck, your legs refuse to perform their functions properly. So now the want of success made our two hours' trudge up to the col seem an unutterable grind, and I was truly glad when we finally set our feet on the summit.

The pass, which has an elevation of 10,400 feet, is little frequented, although it forms the usual route between Valtornanche and the Valpelline. There were no chamois on the eastern side, so, as evening was coming on, we glissaded down the snow towards our quarters for the night. These were to be in a hay chalet on the immense alp, or upland pasture, of Chignana, which lay spread out like a green carpet far down in the valley—a broad plateau of rich, verdant meadow-land over 7,000 feet above the sea, and walled in on three sides by high and rugged mountains. It is the finest and largest mountain pasture I know anywhere, being capable of supporting over three hundred head of cattle. As we descended the cows were being driven home, and the musical tinklings of their bells, blended with the songs of the goatherds, broke pleasantly enough upon the evening air.

A lady friend of Perruquet's gave us rustic hospitality in her chalet, and at nine o'clock I curled myself up in the hay. It was little sleep that I got, however, and next day we were off betimes before dawn. It was a splendid, though exceedingly cold, morning. There was no moon, but the stars glittered like fireflies in the sapphire heavens, and Perruquet complained in an injured tone that the constellations of the Milky Way were *trop serrées*, as he opined, for continued fine weather. Presently, however, their ineffectual fires paled, and the firmament lost its hue of steely blue, as a few faint arrows of saffron light shot over the summit of the Grand Tournalin. Night, or a misty twilight, still filled the lower depths of the valley, until the few fleecy fragments of cloud that flecked the sky became tinged with faint flushes of orange and rose, and day gradually asserted its supremacy over peak and glacier and lowland wood and meadow. The black crags of the Matterhorn and the Breithorn's dazzling summit of snow caught the first rays of slanting sunlight, and soon the whole mountain world became bathed in their radiance. They are glorious phenomena, these Alpine sunrises, though for climbers custom somewhat stalest their magnificence, and familiarity breeds, if not contempt, at any rate something akin to indifference.

They are too much associated with early and scrappy breakfasts, hastily swallowed by the dim flicker of an expiring tallow dip, and sleepy sorties in the murky gleams shed from patent collapsible lanterns. Personally I prefer a good sunset any day. It is more beautiful to begin with, and one is usually in a far better mood to enjoy it. In the early morning one's mind is too much occupied by the serious business of the day to be very susceptible to the charms of scenery.

We were making our way towards a nameless col which crosses the range to the south of the Val Cornera. Soon after leaving the alp, Perruquet, desirous of demonstrating to me that chamois hunting was not all beer and skittles, but had its tragic side as well, pointed out the place where in the early summer they had found the body of a Valtornanche *chasseur*. He was lying quite dead, with his rifle beside him, at the foot of a high rock. Accidents will happen, even in the simplest places, though it puzzled me to think how anyone not meaning to commit suicide could have managed to fall at this particular spot. On the glacier of Chignana we halted near the foot of the Aiguille de Tzan, a queer-shaped pinnacle of rock, over 11,000 feet high, which forms the southernmost buttress of the Valtornanche chain. Here it was arranged that we should separate. Perruquet said he would cross the col to the left of the Aiguille and make the tour of the mountain, while I was to make my way over a higher pass to the right, and descend the glacier on the other side to a band of rocks where the chamois had a favourite passage. Having thus agreed on our plan of campaign, we parted. My climb was rather an arduous one. The glacier was covered with snow in its higher parts and a good deal seamed with crevasses, one of which in particular gave me a lot of trouble. It was very deep, and too wide to jump in most parts, and the rotten snow-bridge that masked it would not support my weight. However, after poking about with my axe for some time, I found a fairly narrow place and landed safely on the edge of the upper lip of the chasm. I fear I was violating all accepted canons of mountaineering in thus wandering alone with a rifle on my back over a snow-covered glacier, but this is sometimes inevitable in chamois hunting. Towards the col the slope grew steeper and I had to begin step-cutting, which was an inexpressibly tedious job. The ice was covered with six or eight inches of loose, powdery, drifted snow, which, as it would not hold, had to be cleared away first; and the rifle slung over my shoulder hampered me horribly. It was

necessary also to keep one's weather eye open for stones, which fell occasionally from the rocks on my right. Altogether it was the toughest half-hour's work I ever had in my life; and, on reaching the top, I fairly groaned, and had to sit down for a few minutes to recover my wind. But the worst was over, at any rate for the present. Turning the end of a most magnificent *schrund*, or crevasse, that yawned formidably wide on my left, its beautiful blue walls of ice forming long winding grottoes of unimaginable depth, I glissaded down some snow and reached the rocks indicated by Perruquet. Glissading, always delightful, is additionally fascinating when you have a loaded rifle on your back and you are not quite sure that there is not a crevasse lurking at the bottom of your slope.

The snow was plentifully marked with chamois tracks, so I lost no time in ambushing myself behind a rock projecting over the cliff, which gave me a good view across the glacier. I could not see Perruquet, but presently there appeared below me a herd of five chamois, whose breakfast he had interrupted on some rocks at the foot of the Aiguille de Tzan, and expectation ran high within me. As bad luck would have it, however, they turned up the wrong couloir and a long way out of shot, and when my hunter returned an hour later and told me he had not seen any others I began to think our chances of sport were looking rather blue, and that we should return as usual, empty-handed, to Prérayen. Proceeding on our way, we saw a kid wandering about the mountains, apparently in search of its lost relations, and spent a most agreeable hour over luncheon and a pipe on a small island of rock in the middle of the glacier. From there we cut steps down a short frozen snow-slope and reached a col leading into the commune, or parish, of Torgnon, whose pastures of curiously varying shades of green, dotted about with fir trees like a toy landscape, I had often looked down upon from our hunting grounds. Here Perruquet, who was leading, suddenly crouched down, and made signs to me to do likewise. In front of us, about two hundred yards off, enjoying their noontide siesta on the snow, were six chamois. They were evidently not easy in their minds, for the wind, with its usual 'contrariness,' was giving them our odour. Suddenly they all sprang up, and, tossing their noses in the air as though they had smelt something inexpressibly nasty, made tracks for the mountain tops at right angles to our line of march. They were a longish way off, but I was well placed behind a rock that afforded a rest for my rifle, and to my huge delight I

saw one fall at the first discharge. The second shot appeared to be without effect, and the chamois vanished from my sight in a small watercourse, reappearing three or four hundred yards off. I noticed there were but three, instead of five, as I expected. As they paused for a moment to regain their footing after two prodigious leaps up the rocks, I put up my longest sight and let fly at the leader. Dozens of times have I fired such shots at long ranges, but never before with effect. This time the result was an atrocious fluke, whereof the recollection even now makes me sad. The animal I aimed at pursued his way rejoicing and unhurt, but the one immediately behind him, a juvenile of very moderate proportions, tumbled off his perch and rolled head over heels down the mountain with a bullet through his neck. As I went to pick him up I heard loud shouts from Perruquet, who had gone to gather my first victim and had found two other corpses a few yards off. Whether they had fallen at the first or second shot we could never make out, but the bullet had evidently passed through the neck of one into the body of another. Chamois do not appreciate the advantages of open-order formation under fire. They have a foolish way of huddling together when alarmed, which makes it difficult sometimes to avoid killing two at a shot, especially when you are firing *à la course*. I was truly grieved to have wrought such wholesale and, I fear, somewhat unsportsmanlike slaughter, as chamois are not numerous, and I seldom care to kill more than two out of any one herd, however large; but the fiendish glee of Perruquet knew no bounds. My qualms of conscience he laughed to scorn, for to the native *chasseur* a chamois is a chamois, without distinction of age or sex. With one exception my quarry were all two-year-old bucks, and therefore, alas! not quite fully grown. I made some excuses for myself on the score of their having taken to their heels before we had an opportunity of examining them with the glass. Moreover, the excellence of their steaks and the delicious *ragoûts* we afterwards enjoyed at the chalet quite reconciled me to their immature age; and with the prospect of such savoury fare before me I felt I could out-Herod Herod in any future massacre of innocents.

We were a long way from Prérayen, and I did not much relish the prospect of bringing home the slain. However, the task proved less formidable than I had anticipated, though it took us no less than six hours to accomplish. Fortunately Perruquet possesses the thews of Anakim, and makes light of such trifling burdens as two or three chamois, especially when they are the

guerdon of a well-managed stalk. Accordingly he tackled the three biggest, while I shouldered the infant victim of the long-range shot, the rifle, and the sack containing our provisions and cooking utensils ; and with this very miscellaneous assortment of baggage on our backs we commenced our trudge homewards over the glacier. I have never tried it, but I should imagine that jumping over crevasses with three chamois on your back can be neither a safe nor agreeable operation. However, in the exuberance of his spirits my worthy weight-carrying hunter cleared two or three moderately wide ones in excellent style, while I, less active and more cautious, divested myself of my impedimenta and threw them across before venturing to jump. Near the edge of one of these fissures we saw something brown sticking out of the snow. On examination it proved to be the leg of a large buck chamois, the remainder of the carcass being firmly embedded in the ice. Probably some hunter had wounded it, and the poor beast had wandered over the glacier and, unable to leap across the crevasse, had lain down and died. After hacking away vigorously with my axe I managed to extricate one of his horns, which I kept as a memento of the day's sport. Our not unpardonable elation lightened our loads and gave strength to our limbs, so that in less than three hours we were clear of the ice, and by nightfall we had deposited our burdens in the kitchen at Prérayen. There was another party of *chasseurs* at the chalet when we arrived, but they had had an unsuccessful day. They congratulated us with much cordiality on our luck, and magnanimously forbore from making any disparaging remarks on our rather under-sized victims.

So ended two days' most enjoyable and interesting sport. I should have preferred it if our bag had been two chamois instead of four ; but chance, which for once favoured us unduly, willed it otherwise. In any case we had had to work for our game. From the chalets of Chignana we had been over fourteen hours pretty continuously on the tramp, and of these fully nine had been spent on the glacier. This should, I think, be sufficient to show that ice-work and chamois hunting are not necessarily incompatible, and, although of serious rock-climbing there had been practically *nil*, the incidents of the trip may serve to illustrate the varied character and interest of sport above the snow line.

HUGH E. M. STUTFIELD.

The Unbidden Guest.

BY E. W. HORNUNG, AUTHOR OF 'TINY LUTTRELL,'
 'A BRIDE FROM THE BUSH,' &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SAVING OF ARABELLA.

ONE night early in December, Arabella burst into Missy's room with singular abruptness. Missy had said good night to the others and was very nearly in bed, but she had not seen Arabella, who had been out all the evening. Evidently she had only now come in. She was breathing quickly from hurrying uphill; and there was a light in her countenance which Missy noticed in due course.

'Missy,' she began, as abruptly as she had entered, 'do you remember the day you first came, and we showed you that group of you all taken when you were quite little?'

Missy nodded in the looking-glass. She was busy with her fringe.

'Well,' continued Arabella, 'you said red came out light, talking of your hair. Do you remember that?'

'Red came out light? No, I can't say I do.'

'You *must*, Missy! You were speaking of your hair in that group—'

Missy flourished a brave bare arm. 'Now I see. My poor old carrots! Of course they came out light; they couldn't come out red, could they?'

'No; but I'm told that red comes out black—that's all.'

Missy faced about in a twinkling. Her bare arms went akimbo. She was pale.

'So that's what excited you, eh?' she cried derisively; yet it

was only in the moment of speaking that she perceived that Arabella was excited at all.

‘I’m *not* excited, Missy !’

‘No ?’

‘Not a bit,’ said Arabella, as she gave herself the scarlet lie from neck to forehead. This amused Missy.

‘Then what is it ?’ said she at last, with a provoking smile which the other could not meet. ‘Is it only that you’re just dying to bowl me out ? All right, my dear, we’ll put it down to that. Only take care I don’t bowl you out too—take very good care that I don’t find out something about *you* !’

Arabella had the pale face now.

‘Take very extra special good care,’ continued Missy, nodding nastily, ‘that I haven’t found out something already !’

‘Have you ?’

The hoarse voice was unknown to Missy, and the frightened face seemed a fresh face altogether. She read it in a moment, and was laughing the next.

‘Of course I haven’t, my good girl !’

‘O Missy !’

‘Just as if you’d done anything you’d mind being found out ! No, my dear, I was only having a lark with you ; but you deserved it for having one with me. Now as to my hair in that photograph—’

‘Oh, but of course I believe you, Missy, and not—and not the person who told me different.’

‘Now I wonder who that was,’ said Missy to herself ; but aloud—‘That’s a blessing ! And now if you’ll let me go to bed, my dear, we’ll neither of us think any more of all this nonsense that we’ve been talking.’

Nevertheless she herself thought about it half that night. And a variety of vague suspicions crystallised at last into a single definite conclusion.

‘She has a man on,’ muttered Missy to her pillow. ‘That’s what’s the matter with Arabella.’

Her mind was fully made up before she slept.

‘I must find out something about it ; what I do see I don’t like ; and I’ve just got to take care of Arabella.’

Forthwith she set herself to watch. It was first of all necessary to become really intimate with Arabella. The latter’s addiction to personal catechism, to name one thing, had kept Missy not a little aloof hitherto. Now, however, in the nick of

time, this weakness passed away, and with it this barrier. There were no more questions asked obviously for the sake of doubting or discrediting the answer. On the other hand, about some things Arabella was as inquisitive as ever; especially, to wit, Missy's love affairs. Curiously enough, this was the one point on which Missy was markedly reticent, for very good reasons of her own; but she had no objection to discussing with Arabella the general subject of love. She noted the fascination this had for her companion. When the latter came to speak of her male ideal, from the point of view of his appearance, Missy noted much more. 'He has a black moustache and very dark eyes,' said she to herself. 'That's the kind I trust least of all!' She knew something about it, evidently.

A tiny incident, however, which happened when Missy had been some five or six weeks at the farm, told her more than Arabella had done, directly or indirectly, in any of their conversations. The girls were in the room with Mr. Teesdale, who was looking on the chimney-piece for a lost letter, when he exclaimed suddenly :

'What's got that meerschaum pipe, Arabella ?'

'Which one was that, father ?' was the only answer, in a suspiciously innocent voice.

'The one I picked up by our slip-rails the night I took Missy back to Melbourne. It belonged to yon man I told you I met on the road. I was saving it in case I ever set eyes on him again.'

'Oh, that one!' cried Arabella; then, after a pause, she added, with a nonchalance which Missy for one admired: 'I gave it back to him the other day.'

'To whom ?'

'Why, the man that lost it.'

'You gave it back—to the man that lost it ?' cried David, in the greatest surprise, while Missy became buried in the *Argus* of that morning. 'Dear me, where have you seen him, honey ?'

'In the township.'

'In the township, eh ? Now what sort of a man was it that you saw in the township ? Tell me what he was like.'

'Like ? Oh, he had—let's see—he had very dark eyes; oh, yes, and a dark moustache and all; and he was very--well, rather handsome, I thought him.'

'Ay, that's near enough,' said Mr. Teesdale, greatly puzzled; 'quite near enough to satisfy me that he's the same man; but

how in the world did you know that he was? That's what I can't make out!'

'Why, he told me himself, to be sure!'

'Ay, but how came he to speak to you at all? That's what I want to know.'

'Then I'm sure I can't tell you,' said Arabella, with a toss of her head, not badly done. 'I suppose he saw where I came from, and I dare say he'd been leaning again' our slip-rails that night he lost his pipe. Anyhow, he asked me whether I'd found one, and I said you had, and he described the one he'd lost, and I knew that must be it. So I came back and got it for him. That was all.'

Mr. Teesdale seemed just a little put out. 'I wonder you didn't say anything about it at the time, my dear,' said he, in mild remonstrance.

'Me? Why, I never thought any more of it,' the young woman said, with a slightly superfluous laugh. 'I—you see that was the first and last I'd seen of him,' added Arabella, as if to end the discussion; but her father had not finished his say.

'I'm glad it was the last, however—I *am* glad o' that!' he exclaimed with unusual energy. 'Why? Because, my dear, little as I saw of him, I didn't like the cut of that man's jib. No,' said Mr. Teesdale, letting his eyes travel through the window to the river-timber, and shaking his head decidedly, as he sat down in his accustomed seat; 'no, I didn't like it at all; and very sorry I should have been to think a man of that stamp was coming here after our Mary Jane!'

And Missy said never a word; but neither word, look, nor tone had escaped her.

Her eyes were very wide open now. Arabella went out more evenings than one, but never, it appeared, on two consecutive evenings; so the man was not living in the district. And Missy said so much the worse; he was not merely passing his time. To clinch matters, the unhappy girl began to hang out signs of sleepless nights and perpetual nervous preoccupation by day—signs which Missy alone interpreted aright.

At length, a little before Christmas, there came a night when Arabella kissed them all round and went off to her room much earlier than usual. And the fever in her eyes and lips was noted by Missy, and by Missy alone.

It was a night of stars only. The moon by which Missy had killed her one native cat, and nursed an infant opossum, had

waxed and waned. The night, when Mr. Teesdale took a breath of it last thing, looked black as soot. Twenty minutes later, the farmhouse was in utter darkness; not a single ray from a single window; and so it remained for nearly two hours.

Then suddenly a light shone in the parlour for a single instant only. The outer door of the little gun-room was now opened, as noiselessly as might be, and shut again, hairbreadth by hairbreadth. The odd thing was, that this happened not once, but twice within five minutes. And each time it was a woman's figure that stood up under the stars, and then stole forth into the night.

There were two of them; and while the first went swiftly in a given direction (towards the timbered gully), the second made a quick circuit of the premises, and, as it happened, intercepted the first among the trees as though she had been lying in wait there for hours. Then it was 'O Missy!' and Arabella uttered a stifled, terrified scream.

'Yes, it's Missy,' said that young woman soberly. 'And I wonder what we're doing out here at this time of night, both of us.'

'I'm having a walk,' said Arabella, giggling half hysterically.

'That's exactly what I'm doing; so we can walk together.'

'You've followed me out, you mean girl!' cried Arabella, with wholly hysterical wrath. She had, indeed, been for pushing forward after the first shock, but when Missy stepped out alongside there was nothing for it but a pitched battle on the spot.

'I have so,' said Missy. 'I know all about it, you see.'

'All about what?'

'What you are after.'

'And what am I after, since you're so mighty clever?'

'You're meeting that man.'

'What man?' Arabella was quaking pitifully.

'The man you're always meeting; but to-night you meant to run away with him.'

'Spy!' said Arabella. 'What makes you think that?'

'You have put on all your best things.'

'But what makes you think there is a man at all?'

'Oh, I saw that ages ago; though mind you, I have never seen *him*. It is the man with the meerschaum pipe, now isn't it?'

Arabella's first answer was a shaking fist. Next moment she was shaking all over, in a storm of tears during which Missy took hold of her with both arms, was thrown off, took a fresh hold, and was then suffered to keep it. At last she asked :

‘Where were you to meet him, Arabella?’

The answer came with more sobs than words. ‘At the top corner of the Cultivation : the road corner : he is to wait there till I come.’

‘Good!’ said Missy. ‘That's half a mile away, and where we are is out of hearing of the house. Not so sure, eh? Well, come a little further down the gully. That's better! Now we're safe as the bank, and you'll stop and tell me something about him, won't you, dear, before you go?’

Before she went! Could she ever go now? All the strength which this poor creature had imbibed from a man as masterful as the woman was weak—an imitative courage, never for a moment her honest own—had been rooted up easily enough from the soul where there was no soil for it, and was now as though it had never existed. Such nerve as she had summoned up was gone. Yes, she would stop and talk ; that would be a relief. And Missy should hear all, all there was to tell ; but this was very little, incredibly little indeed.

On that first evening, when Missy had come and gone, Arabella had taken a stroll by herself after supper ; had been thinking more about the *Family Cherub* story, in which she was then engrossed, than of anything else that she could now remember ; but it appeared her head had been full at the time of romantic stuff of one kind or another, so that when she came very suddenly upon a handsome stranger leaning over the slip-rails and smoking his pipe, it was readily revealed to Arabella that she had been waiting for that moment and that stranger all her life. She said as much now, in other words, but wasted time in unnecessary dilatation upon the man's good looks before proceeding with her confession. He had spoken soft words to her in the soft night air. He had kissed her across the slip-rails. And Arabella had lived thirty years in her tiny corner of the world, but never before had she been kissed by the mouth of man not a Teesdale. Missy might stare as much as she liked ; it was the sacred truth, was that.

So much for the first meeting, which was a pure accident. There had been others which were nothing of the kind. Missy nodded, as much as to say she knew all about those other meet-

ings, and hurried Arabella to the point. That the foolish girl knew less than nothing worth knowing about this man was only too evident; but it seemed his name was Stanborough. And to-morrow, said Arabella, with a sudden hauling at the slack of her nerves, this would be her name too.

Then she still meant to go?

Arabella fell to pieces again. She had promised. He was waiting. He would kill her if she broke her promise.

'Kill your grandmother!' said Missy. 'Let him wait. Shall I tell you who'll kill who if you do go?'

'Who?' said Arabella in a whisper.

'Why, you'll kill your father, as sure as ever God made you, my girl.'

'But we should soon come back—and with money enough to help them here tremendously! He has promised that; and you don't know how well off he is, Missy. Yes, yes, we should soon come back after we were married!'

'I dare say—after that,' said Missy dryly.

'Then you don't think he—means—'

'Of course he doesn't.'

'How do you know?'

'Never mind how I know. It's enough that I *do* know, as sure as I'm standing under this tree. You've told me quite sufficient. I feel as if I knew your man as well as I've known two or three. The brutes! And I tell you, 'Bella, that if you go to him now, as you thought of doing, your life will be blasted from this night on. He will never marry you. He hasn't gone the right way about that. No, but he'll ruin you and leave you in your ruin; and when he does, may the Lord have mercy on your soul!'

She had said. And the extraordinary emotion which had gathered in her voice as she went on had the effect of taking Arabella out of herself even then.

'Missy,' she whispered—'Missy, you are crying! How can you know so much that is terrible? You seem to know all about it, Missy!'

'Never mind how much I know, or how I came to know it,' cried the other. 'I know enough to want to save you from what some girls I've known have come to. To say nothing of saving your dear old father's life. For kill him it would.'

Arabella had been marvelling; but now her own difficulty clutched her afresh.

'He will kill *me* if I don't go to him. He has said so,' she moaned in her misery, 'and he will.'

'Not he! He's a coward. I feel as if I knew the beast—and precious soon I shall.'

Arabella started. 'What do you mean?' said she.

'I mean that you've got to leave your friend to me. I'll soon settle him.'

Missy spoke cheerily. Her new tone inspired confidence in the breast of Arabella, who whispered eagerly, 'How can you? Ah, if you only could!'

'You would like it?'

'I should thank God! O Missy, I have been such a wicked, foolish girl, but you are so strong and brave! I shall love you for this all my life!'

'Will you? I wonder,' said Missy. 'But never mind that now. Go you back to the house, and if I don't come to your room in less than half an hour and tell you that I've sent Mr. Stanborough about his business—'

'Hush!' exclaimed the other in low alarm. 'I hear him now. He is coming to look for me.'

It was a very faint sound, but terror had sharpened the girl's ears. It was the sound of a walking-stick swishing the dry grass on the further slope of the gully. Missy heard it also when she bent her ear to listen, and the next moment she had her companion by the shoulders.

'Now run,' said she, 'and run for your life. No, we've no time for any of that stuff now. Time enough to thank me when I come and tell you I've sent him to the right-about for good and all. Run quickly—keep behind the trees—and all will be well before you're an hour older.'

And so they separated, Arabella hurrying upward to the farm, her heart drumming against her ribs, while Missy trudged down the hill at her full height, with a marble mouth, and both fists clenched.

CHAPTER IX.

FACE TO FACE.

FOR, whatever else this wild girl may have been, she was obviously not a coward. That is the one thing to be said for Missy without any hesitation whatever. Alone, and in the night, she was going

to pit herself against an unknown man, who was certainly a villain ; yet on she went, with her chin in the air and her arms swinging free. The trees were thickest at the bottom of the low gully. The girl came through them with a brisk glance right and left, but never a lagging step. On the further slope the trees spread out again, and here, on comparatively open ground, she did stop, and suddenly. She could smell the man's pipe in the sweet night air ; the man himself was nowhere to be seen.

Missy filled her lungs slowly through her teeth, and emptied them with dilated nostrils. Then she went on, longing in her heart for a moon. In the starlight it was not possible to see clearly very many yards ahead. So far as she could see—and her eyes were good—there was no one in that paddock but herself. Yet a faint smell of tobacco still slightly fouled the air. And this was the very worst part of the whole business ; it had brought Missy at last to a second stand-still, and to the determination of singing out, when, without warning sound, an arm was flung round her neck, soft words were being whispered in her ear, and Missy who was no coward felt the veins freezing in her body.

She flung herself free with a great effort, then reeled against the she-oak from behind which he had crept who now stood taking off his hat to her in the starlight.

'I beg your pardon,' said a rich, suave voice in its suavest tones ; 'upon my word, I beg your pardon from the very bottom of my heart ! I thought—I give you my word I thought you were another young lady altogether !'

Missy had recovered a measure of her customary self-control. 'So I see—so I see,' she managed to say distinctly enough ; but her voice was the voice of another person.

'Thank you, indeed ! You are very generous,' said the man, raising his hat once more ; 'few women would have understood. The fact is, as I say, I took you for a certain young lady whom I quite expected to meet before this. Perhaps you have seen her, and could tell me where she is ? For we have missed each other among these gum-trees.'

The fellow's impudence was good for Missy.

'Yes, I have seen her,' said she, as calmly as the other.

'And where may she be at this moment ?'

'In her father's house.'

The man stood twirling his moustache and showing the white teeth under it. Then he stuck in his mouth a meerschaum he had in his hand, and sucked silently at the pipe for some

moments. 'I beg your pardon once more; but I fear we are at cross-purposes,' said he presently. He had been considering.

'I don't think it,' said Missy.

'And why not?' This with a smile.

'Because I have a message for you, Mr. Stanborough.'

'Ha!'

'A message from Arabella Teesdale,' said Missy, who had lowered her tone and drawn the other a pace nearer in his eagerness.

'And?' he asked; but he was made to wait. 'Will you have the goodness to give me that message? Tell me what she says, can't you?'

'Oh, certainly!' replied Missy, with a laugh. 'I was to say that she had been very foolish, but has come to her senses in time; and that you will never see her any more, as she has thought better of it, and is done with you for good and all!'

There was a pause first, and then a short sardonic laugh.

'So you were to say all that! It isn't the easiest thing in the world to take it in all at once. Do you mind saying some of it over again?'

'Once is enough. You've got your warning; it's no good your coming after 'Bella Teesdale no more. If you do, you look out for her brother, that's all!'

'John William, eh?' The man laughed again.

'Yes.'

'I know all about the family, you see. I know all about you too—in a way. I never knew you were 'Bella's keeper, I must admit. She merely told me you were a young English lady, of the name of Miss Miriam Oliver, who landed the other week in the *Parramatta*.'

'So I am,' said Missy, trembling violently. Her back was still to the good she-oak, but the man had come so close to her now that she could not have escaped him if she would.

'Now that's very interesting,' he hissed, so that the moisture from his mouth struck her in the face. 'If I'd been asked who you were, d'ye see, without first being told, d'ye know what I should have said? I should have said that the other week—just about the time the *Parramatta* came in—there was a certain member of the Bijou Chorus, who answered to the name of Ada Lefroy. And I should have said that Miss Miriam Oliver, of England, was so exactly the dead-spit of Miss Ada Lefroy, of the Bijou Theatre, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, in the Southern

Hemisphere, that they must be one and the same young lady. As it is, I'll strike a light and see.'

He struck one on the spot. Missy was staring at him with still eyes in a white face. He laughed softly, and used the match to relight his meerschaum pipe, which had gone out.

'Well, if this doesn't lick creation!' he murmured, nodding his head very slowly, to look the girl up and down. 'To think that I should have missed you from the town and found you in the country! The swell young lady from Home! Good Lord, it's too rich to be true.'

Missy opened her lips that had been fast, and under that she-oak her language would have surprised the Teesdales.

'Come, this is more like,' said the other, clapping his hands in mock approval. 'Now you'll feel better, eh? And now you'll tell me how you worked it, I'm sure.'

Missy said what she would do instead.

'Then I must just tell myself. Let's see now: your father —ha! ha!—was old Teesdale's old friend, and luckily for you he'd warned them his daughter was something out of the common. That *was* luck! And you *were* out of the common! Hasn't 'Bella told me the things you said and did, till I was sick and tired? Faith, I'd have listened better if I'd dreamt it was you! I remember her saying you brought a letter of introduction, however; and that you must have stole, my beauty!'

Missy cleared her throat. 'I found it,' she said.

'You found it! That's a lot better, isn't it? A fat lot! Anyhow, out you came, to pose as my young lady from Home till further orders. And my oath, it was one of the cheekiest games I've heard of yet!'

'I only came out for a lark,' Missy said sullenly. 'It was they that put it into my head to come back and stay. I couldn't help it. It was better here than in Melbourne. Much better!'

'Morally, eh?'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean, this is a cleaner life than t'other—what?'

'It is. Thank God!'

Stanborough laughed. (Missy had known him under another name, but she was hardly in a position to gain anything by reminding him of that.) 'A mighty fine life,' said he, 'with a mighty fine lie at the bottom of it!'

'Yes,' said Missy slowly, 'that's true enough. But I'm a better sort than when I came here, I know that!'

'A better sort, eh? Ha! ha! ha! That's good, that is. That's very good indeed.'

But the girl was too much in earnest to heed the sneers. 'You may laugh as you like—it's God's truth,' cried she. 'And Melbourne will never see me no more, nor London neither. Why? 'Cause when I clear out of this, I clear up-country; and up-country I shall live ever after; yes, and very likely marry and die respectable. So you can go on jeering—'

'Stop! Not so fast,' said Stanborough. 'You seem to have got it all cut and dried; but when did you think of clearing out of this? Suppose you're safe till there's been time for the mails home and out again. That takes three months; you've been here more than one already, and you meant to stop just one month more. Good! very good indeed. Sorry your one month more has gone so quickly—sorry it's only one more *night* instead. However, that's the misfortune of war. Quite understand? Not another month—another night only—that's to-night—and a little bit of to-morrow.'

Missy remarked at length:

'So you mean to give me away; I might have known that.'

'Of course I do. Six months hard, that's what you will get.' Missy shuddered. Her tormentor watched her and continued: 'So that makes you sit up, does it, my dear? She didn't know she was breaking the law, didn't she? She'll find out soon enough—find out what it costs to pass yourself off as another person, in this Colony—find out what the inside of Carlton Jail's like, too! Not go back to town. That *was* good, that was.'

The girl could only pant and glare and wring her hands. More followed in the same strain.

'Nice night, ain't it? Nice breeze coming up to kiss the leaves and make 'em cry! Hark at 'em, tree after tree. There goes this she-oak over our heads! Nice and cool on your face, too, isn't it? Nice wholesome smell of eucalyptus—and all the rest of it. Oh, a sweet night altogether, and one to remember—for your last night out o' prison!'

'You brute!' said Missy, and worse.

He listened patiently, nodding his head at each name. And then—

'All that? Not so fast, my dear, not half so fast, if you please. You're in far too much of a hurry, I do assure you.

All that's supposing I *do* give you away.' The man's tone was changed.

'But you're going to.'

'No,' replied Stanborough, 'not if you'll clear right out to-night. Do that, and I won't say a word to a soul; not even at the farm will I give you away, once you're gone. It'll just be a case of your going as mysteriously as you came; and they may never find out the truth about you; but even if they do, you'll be far enough before they do. Only clear out to-night!'

'And leave 'Bella to you? I'll see you further—'

'And yourself in quod—'

'I don't care; you're not going to ruin Arabella.'

There was a pause.

'Do you know what I've half a mind to do?' Stanborough said at length in an exceedingly calm voice.

'Yes; to kill me. But you haven't half the pluck—not you! I know you of old.'

'All right, we shall see. I give you the rest of this night to clear out in. If you don't, you may lose me my game; but you may bet, Ada Lefroy, I'll have you locked up before you're a day older.'

He shook his fist in her face and went away very abruptly; but in a minute he was back, all eagerness and soft persuasion.

'I have nothing against you, Ada,' he began now. 'You and I have had fun together. And after all, what have I to gain by getting you locked up? What is it to me if you hoodwink these old people and run your own risk? Why should I want you to clear out to-night? See here, my girl, I don't want you to do anything of the kind. You sit tight as long as you think you can; only go back now, like a sensible sort, and get 'Bella to come along with me, like another.'

'I can't.'

'You could. It was you who persuaded her not to come. I know it was; so don't tell me you couldn't persuade her that I am all right, and to keep her word with me after all.'

'Then I won't say I couldn't. I'll say I never will.'

'And you mean that?'

'Of course I mean it.'

'Well knowing that I shall come and expose you to-morrow, or the next day, or the day after that? By George, it 'd be sport to keep you waiting!'

'Then have your sport. Have it! I will never leave 'Bella, that's one thing sure.'

'You'd go to prison for her?'

'I'd do anything for any of them.'

'Then go to hell for them!'

With that he lifted his clenched fist and struck at the girl's face, but she put up her hands, and only her lip was grazed. When she lowered her hands the man was gone.

And this time he was gone altogether. Missy waited, cowering behind the tree, now on this side, now on that. But there were no more footsteps in the short, dry grass until Missy herself stole out from under that she-oak, and crept down into the gully, with giving knees and her chin on her breast, a very different figure from the bold adventuress who had marched up that same slope a short hour earlier in the night. And the stars were still shining all over the little weather-board homestead, so softly, so peacefully, when Missy got back to it. And in the verandah was the wooden chair in which she would sit to read to Mr. Teesdale, and the wooden chair in which Mr. Teesdale would sit and listen. And Missy glided up and took away their book, which lay forgotten on one of the chairs; and then she glided back, thinking chiefly of the last chapter they had read together. They were hardly likely to read another now. But that was not a nice thought; and the farmhouse lay so still and serene under the stars, it was good to watch it longer; for the little homestead had never before seemed half so sweet or so desirable in the girl's eyes. And these were the only waking eyes just then on the premises, for even Arabella had fallen into a fitful, feverish sleep, from which, however, she was presently awakened in the following manner.

Something hot and dry had touched her hand that was lying out over the coverlet. Something else that was also hot, but not dry, had fallen upon that hand, and more of the same sort were still falling. So Arabella awoke frightened; and there was Missy, kneeling at her bedside, fondling her hand, and sobbing as she prayed aloud. Arabella heard without listening. Days afterwards she took out of her ears two phrases: 'whatever I have been' and 'bad as I am.' These words she put in due season through the mills of her mind; but at the time she simply said:

'Missy! What are you doing? Ah, I remember. Have you seen him? Tell me what he said—what has happened—and what is going to happen now.'

‘I’ve seen him and settled him,’ Missy whispered firmly as she dried her eyes. ‘What he said isn’t of any account. But nothing’s going to happen—nothing—nothing at all.’

CHAPTER X.

THE THINNING OF THE ICE.

OLD Teesdale sat with his arm-chair drawn close to the table, and his shirt-sleeves rolled up to the elbow. He was writing a letter in which he had already remarked that it was the hottest Christmas Eve within even his experience of that colony. In the verandah, indeed, the thermometer had made the shade heat upwards of 100° since nine o’clock in the morning, touching 110° in the early afternoon. It was now about six (Mr. Teesdale being still without his watch was never positive of the time), and because of Mrs. T.’s theory that to open a window was to let in the heat, to say nothing of the flies, the atmosphere of the parlour with its reminiscences of the day’s meals was sufficiently unendurable. A little smoke from Mr. Teesdale’s pipe would surely have improved it if anything; but that was against the rules of the house, and the poor gentleman, who was not master of it, wrote on and on with the perspiration standing on his bald head, and the reek of the recent tea in his nose.

He was on the third leaf of a letter for the English mail. ‘As to Miriam herself’—thus the paragraph began which was still being penned—‘I can only say that she is the life and soul of our quiet home, and what we shall do without her when she goes I really do not like to think. Referring again to the letter in which you advised me of her arrival, and to those “habits and ways” of which you warned me, I cannot deny that I soon saw what you meant; but I must say that I would not have Miriam without her “mannerisms” even if I could. They may be modern, but they are very entertaining indeed to us, who are so far behind the times. Yes, the young girls of our day may have talked less “slang” and paid more attention to “appearances,” but no girl ever had a warmer heart than your Miriam, nor a kinder nature, nor a franker way with her in all her dealings. But her kindness is what has struck me most, from the very first, and especially her kindness to an old man like me. You should see her sit and read to me by the hour, and help me with whatever little thing I may

happen to be doing, and listen to my talk as though I were a young man like our John William. Then I think you would understand why I am always saying that she never could have been anybody's daughter but yours, and why I want to keep her as long as ever you will let her stay. She has spoken of going on to other friends after the New Year; but I wish you would insist upon her coming back to us for a *real long visit* before she leaves the colony for good; and I know that you would do so if you could but see the change which even a few weeks with us has already wrought in her. You must know, my dear Oliver, that we live here very simply indeed; but I am of opinion that simple living and early hours were what Miriam needed more than anything else, for it is no exaggeration to say that she does not look the same girl who first came to see us with your letter of introduction. She has a better colour, her whole face is brighter and healthier, and the tired look I at first noticed in her eyes has gone out of them once and —'

At this point Mr. Teesdale paused, pen in air. He was a very careful letter-writer, who wrote a beautiful old-fashioned hand, and made provision for perfectly even spaces by means of a black-lined sheet nicely adjusted under the leaf; and he rounded each sentence in his own mind before neatly committing it to paper. Thus a single erasure was a great rarity in his letters, while two would have made him entirely rewrite. On the other hand, many a minute here and there was spent in peering through the gun-room window, and scouring the Dandinong Ranges for the right word; and now several minutes went thus in one lump, because Mr. Teesdale was by nature an even greater stickler for the literal truth than for flawless penmanship, and he had caught himself in the act of writing what was not strictly true. It was a fact that the tired look had gone out of Missy's eyes, but to add 'once and for all' was to make the whole statement a lie, according to Mr. Teesdale's standard. For the last thirty-six hours that tired look had been back in those bright eyes, which brightened now but by fits and starts. David did not so define it, but the girl looked hunted. He merely knew that she did not look to-day or yesterday as she had looked for some weeks without a break, therefore he could not and would not say that she did. Accordingly the predicate of the unfinished sentence was radically altered until that sentence stood . . . 'and the tired look I at first noticed in her eyes is to be seen in them but very seldom now.'

But the erasure had occurred on the fifth page, on a new sheet altogether, which it was certainly worth while to commence afresh ; and old Teesdale had scarcely regained the point at which he had tripped when the door opened, and the subject of his letter was herself in the room beside him, looking swiftly about her, as if to make certain that he was alone, before allowing her eyes to settle upon his welcoming smile.

‘Well, Missy, and what have you been doing with yourself since tea ?’

‘I?’ said the girl absently, as she glanced into the gun-room, and then out of each window, very keenly, before sitting down on the sofa. ‘I? Oh, I’ve been having a sleep, that’s what I’ve been doing.’

Mr. Teesdale was watching her narrowly as he leant back in his chair. She did not look to him as though she had been sleeping ; but that was of course his own fancy. On the other hand, the strange expression in Missy’s eyes, which he could not quite define, struck the old man as stranger and more conspicuous than ever.

‘I’m afraid, my dear, that you haven’t been getting your proper sleep lately.’

‘You’re right. There’s no peace for the wicked these red-hot nights, let alone the extra wicked, like me.’

‘Get away with you !’ said old Teesdale, laughing at the grave girl who was staring him in the face without the glimmer of a smile.

‘Get away I will, one of these days ; and glad enough you’ll be when that day comes and you know all about me. I’ve always told you a day like that would come sooner or later. It might come to-morrow—it might come to-night !’

‘Missy, my dear, I do wish you’d smile and show me you’re only joking. Not that it’s one of your best jokes, my dear, nor one of your newest either. Ah, that’s it—that’s better !’

She had jumped up to look once more out of the window : a man was passing towards the henyard, it was little Geordie, and Missy sat down smiling.

‘Then tell me what it is you’re busy with,’ she began in a different tone ; an attempt at the old saucy manner which the farmer loved as a special, sacred perquisite of his own.

‘Now you’re yourself again ! I’m writing a long, long letter, Missy. Guess who to !’

‘To—to Mr. Oliver?’

‘Mr. Oliver! Your father, my dear—your own father! Now guess what it’s about, if you can!’

‘About—me?’

David nodded his head with great humour.

‘Yes, it’s about you. A nice character I’m giving you, you may depend!’

‘Are you saying that I’m a regular bad lot then?’

‘Ah, that’s telling!’

‘If you were, you wouldn’t be far from the mark, if you only knew it. But let’s hear what you *have* said.’

‘Nay, come! You don’t expect me to let you hear what I’ve said about you, do you, Missy?’

‘Of course I do,’ said Missy firmly.

‘But that would be queer! Nay, Missy, I couldn’t show you this letter, I really couldn’t. For one thing, it would either make you conceited or else very indignant with poor me!’

‘So that’s the kind of character you’ve been giving me, is it?’ said Missy, smiling grimly. ‘Now I must see it.’

‘Nay, come, I don’t think you must, Missy—I don’t think you must!’

‘But I *want* to.’

So exclaiming, the girl rose resolutely to her feet; and her resolution settled the matter; for it will have been seen that the weak old man himself was all the time wishing her to see what he had written about her. After all, why should she not know how fond he was of her? If it made her ever such a little bit fonder of him, well, there surely could be no harm in that. Still, Mr. Teesdale chose to walk up and down the room while Missy stood at the window to read his letter, for it was now growing dark.

‘I see you mention that twenty pounds.’ Missy had looked up suddenly from the letter. ‘How was it you managed to get the money that night, after all? I have often meant to ask you.’

Mr. Teesdale stopped in his walk. ‘What does it matter how I got them, honey? I neither begged, borrowed, nor stole ‘em, if that’s what you want to know.’ The old gentleman laughed.

‘I want to know lots more than that, because it matters a very great deal, when I went and put you to all that inconvenience.’

‘Well, I went to the man who buys all our milk. I told you I was going to him, didn’t I?’

‘Yes, but I’ve heard you say here at table that you haven’t had a farthing from him these six months.’

‘Missy, my dear,’ remonstrated the old man, with difficulty smiling, ‘you will force me to ask you—to mind——’

‘My own business? Right you are. What’s the time?’

‘The time!’ The question did indeed seem irrelevant. ‘I’m sure I don’t know, but I’ll go and have a look at the kitchen——’

‘Then you needn’t. I don’t really want to know. I was only wondering when John William would be back from Melbourne. But where’s your watch?’

‘Getting put to rights, my dear,’ said old Teesdale faintly, with his eyes upon the carpet.

‘What, still?’

‘Yes; they’re keeping it a long time, aren’t they?’

‘They are so,’ said Missy dryly. She watched the old man as he crossed the room twice, with his weak-kneed steps, his white hands joined behind him and his thin body bent forward. Then she went on reading his letter.

It affected her curiously. At the third page she uttered a quick exclamation; at the fourth she lowered the letter with as quick a gesture, and stood staring at David with an expression at which he could only guess, because the back of her head was against the glass.

‘This is too much,’ cried Missy in a broken voice. ‘I can never let you send this.’

‘And why not, my dear?’ laughed Mr. Teesdale, echoing, as he thought, her merriment; for it was to this he actually attributed the break in her voice.

‘Because there isn’t a word of truth in it; because I haven’t a warm heart nor a kind nature, and because I’m *not* frank in my dealings. Frank, indeed! If you knew what I really was, you wouldn’t say that in a hurry!’

Mr. Teesdale could no longer suppose that the girl was in fun. Her bosom was heaving with excitement; he could see that, if he could not see her face. He said wearily:

‘There you go again, Missy! I can’t understand why you keep saying such silly things.’

‘I’m not what you think me. You understand that, don’t you?’

‘I hear what you say, but I don’t believe a word of it.’

‘Then you must! You shall! I can’t bear to deceive you a

moment longer—I simply can't bear it when you speak and think of me like this. First of all, then, this letter's no good at all !'

In another instant that letter fluttered upon the floor in many pieces.

' You must forgive me,' said Missy, ' I couldn't help it; it wasn't worth the paper it was written on; and now I'm going to tell you why.'

Old Teesdale, however, had never spoken, and this silenced the girl also, for the moment. But that moment meant a million. One more, and Missy would have confessed everything. She was worked up to it. She was in continual terror of an immediate exposure. Her better nature was touched and cauterised with shame for the sweet affection of which she had cheated this simple old man. She would tell him everything now and here, and the mercy that filled his heart would be extended to her because she had not waited to be unmasked by another. But she paused to measure him with her eye, or, perhaps, to take a last look at him looking kindly upon her. And in that pause the door opened, making Missy jump with fright; and when it was only Arabella who entered with the lighted kerosene lamp, Missy's eyes sped back to the old man's face in time to catch a sorrowful mute reproach that went straight to her palpitating heart. She stooped without a word to help him gather up the fragments of the torn letter.

She had no further opportunity of speaking that night; and supper would have been a silent meal but for what happened as they all sat at table. All, that night, did not include John William, who was evidently spending Christmas Eve in Melbourne. There was some little talk about him. David remarked that a mail would be in with the Christmas letters, and Missy was asked whether she had not told John William to call at the post office. She had not. During her sojourn at the farm she had only once been to the post office herself; had never sent; and had been told repeatedly she was not half anxious enough about her Home letters. They told her so now. Missy generally said it was because she was so happy and at-home with them; but to-night she made no reply; and this was where they were when there came that knock at the window which made Missy spill her cocoa and otherwise display a strange state of mind.

' Who is it ?' she cried. ' Who do you think it is ?'

' Maybe some neighbour,' said Mrs. T., ' to wish us the compliments o' t' season.'

‘If not old Father Christmas himself!’ laughed David to Missy, in the wish that she should forgive herself, as he had forgiven her, for tearing up his letter. But Missy could only stare at the window-blind, behind which the knock had been repeated, and she was trembling very visibly indeed. Then the front-door opened, and it was Missy, not one of the family, that rushed out into the passage to see who it was. The family heard her shouting for joy:

‘It’s John William. It’s only John William after all. Oh, you dear, dear old Jack!’

Very quickly she was back in the room, and down on the horsehair sofa, breathing heavily. John William followed in his town clothes.

‘Yes, of course it’s me. Good evening, all. Who did you think it was, Missy?’

‘I thought it was visitors. What if it had been? Oh, I hate visitors, that’s all!’

‘Then I’m sorry to hear it,’ remarked Mrs. Teesdale sourly, ‘for we have visitors coming to-morrow.’

‘I hate ‘em, too,’ said John William wilfully.

‘Then I’ll thank you to keep your hates to yourselves,’ cried Mrs. T. ‘It’s very rude of you both. Your mother wouldn’t have spoke so, Missy!’

‘Wouldn’t she?’ laughed the girl. ‘I wonder if you know much about my mother. But after that I think I’ll be off to bed. I *am* rude, I know I am, but I never pretended to be anything else.’

This was fired back at them from the door, and then Missy was gone without saying good night.

‘She’s not like her mother,’ said Mrs. T. angrily; ‘no, that she isn’t!’

‘But why in the name of fortune go and tell her so?’ John William blurted out. ‘I never knew anything like you, mother; on Christmas Eve, too!’

‘I think,’ said David gently, ‘that Missy is not quite herself. She has been very excitable all day, and I think it would have been better to have taken no notice of what she said. You should remember, my dear, that she is utterly unused to our climate, and that even to us these last few days have been very trying.’

Arabella was the only one who had nothing at all to say, either for Missy or against her. But she went to Missy’s room a little later, and there she spoke out:

' You thought it was—Stanborough ! I saw you did.'

' Then I did—for the moment. But it was very silly of me—I don't know what could have put him into my head, when I've settled him so finely for good and all !'

' God bless you, Missy ! But—but do you think there is any fear of him coming back and walking right in like that ?'

' Not the least. Still, if he did—if he *did*, mark you—I'd tackle him again as soon as look at him. So never you fear, my girl, you leave him to me.'

CHAPTER XI.

A CHRISTMAS OFFERING.

IN the Melbourne shops that Christmas Eve the younger Teesdale had been perpetrating untold acts of extravagance, for two of which a certain very bad character was entirely and solely responsible. Thus with next day's Christmas dinner there was a bottle of champagne, and the healths of Mr. and Mrs. Oliver, and of Miriam their daughter, were drunk successively, and with separate honours. Missy thereat seemed to suffer somewhat from her private feelings, as indeed she did suffer, but those feelings were not exactly what they were suspected to be at the time. She was wondering how much longer she could keep up this criminal pretence and act this infamous part. And as she wondered, a delirious recklessness overcame her, and emptying her glass she jumped to her feet to confess to them all then and there; but the astonished eye of Mrs. Teesdale went like cold steel to her heart, and she wished them long life and prosperity instead. She found herself seated once more with a hammering heart and sensations that drove her to stare hard at the old woman's unsympathetic face, as her own one chance of remaining cool till the end of the meal. And yet a worse moment was to follow hard upon the last.

Missy had made straight for the nearest and the thickest shelter, which happened to underlie that dark jagged rim of river-timber at which old Teesdale was so fond of gazing. She had thrown herself face downward on a bank beside the sluggish brown stream; her fingers were interwoven under her face, her thumbs stuck deep into her ears. So she did not hear the foot-

steps until they were close beside her, when she sat up suddenly with a face of blank terror.

It was only John William. 'Who did you think it was?' said he, smiling as he sat down beside her.

Missy was trembling dreadfully. 'How was I to know?' she answered nervously. 'It might have been a bushranger, mightn't it?'

'Well, hardly,' replied John William, as seriously as though the question had been put in the best of good faith. And it now became obvious that he also had something on his mind and nerves, for he shifted a little further away from Missy, and sat frowning at the dry brown grass, and picking at it with his fingers.

'Anyhow, you startled me,' said Missy, as she arranged the caroty fringe that had been shamefully dishevelled a moment before. 'I am very easily startled, you see.'

'I am very sorry. I do apologise, I'm sure! And I'll go away again this minute, Missy, if you like.'

He got to his knees with the words, which were spoken in a more serious tone than ever.

'Oh, no, don't go away. I was only moping. I am glad you've come.'

'Thank you, Missy.'

'But now you have come, you've got to talk and cheer me up. See? There's too many things to think about on a Christmas Day—when—when you're so far away from everybody.'

John William agreed and sympathised. 'The fact is I had something to show you,' he added; 'that's why I came.'

'Then show away,' said Missy, forcing a smile. 'Something in a cardboard box, eh?'

'Yes. Will you open it and tell me how you like it?' He handed her the box that he had taken out of his breast-pocket. Missy opened it and produced a very yellow bauble of sufficiently ornate design.

'Well, I'm sure! A bangle!'

'Yes; but what do you think of it?' asked John William anxiously. He had also blushed very brown.

'Oh, of course I think it's beautiful—beautiful!' exclaimed Missy, with unmistakable sincerity. 'But who's it for? That's what I want to know,' she added, as she scanned him narrowly.

'Can't you guess?'

'Well, let's see. Yes—you're blushing! It's for your young woman, that's evident.'

John William edged nearer.

'It's for the young *lady*—the young lady I should like to be mine—only I'm so far below her,' he began in a murmur. Then he looked at her hard. 'Missy, for God's sake forgive me,' he cried out, 'but it's for you!'

'Nonsense!'

'But I mean it. I got it last night. Do, please, have it.'

'No,' said Missy firmly. 'Thank you ever so very awfully much; but you must take it back.' And she held it out to him with a still hand.

'I can't take it back—I won't!' cried young Teesdale excitedly. 'Consider it only as a Christmas box—surely your father's godson may give you a little bit of a Christmas box? That's me, Missy, and anything else I've gone and said you must forgive and forget too, for it was all a slip. I didn't mean to say it, Missy, I didn't indeed. I hope I know my position better than that. But this here little trumpery what-you-call-it, you must accept it as a Christmas present from us all. Yes, that's what you must do; for I'm bothered if I take it back.'

'You must,' repeated Missy very calmly. 'I think you mean to break my heart between you with your kindness. Here's the box and here's the bangle.'

John William looked once and for all into the resolute light eyes. Then first he took the box and put the lid on it, and stowed it away in his breast-pocket; and after that he took that gold bangle, very gingerly, between finger and thumb, and spun it out into the centre of the brown river, where it made bigger, widening bangles, that took the best part of a minute to fail and die away. Then everything was stiller than before; and stillest of all were the man and the woman who stood facing each other on the bank, speckled with the steep sunlight that came down on them like rain through the leaves of the river-timber overhead.

'That was bad,' said Missy at last. 'Something else was worse. It's not much good your trying to hedge matters with me; and for my part I'm going to speak straight and plain for once. If I thought that you'd gone and fallen in love with *me*—as sure as we're standing here, Jack, I'd put myself where you've put that bangle.'

Her hand pointed to the place. There was neither tremor in the one nor ripple upon the other.

'But why?' Teesdale could only gasp.

'Because *I'm* so far below *you*.'

'Missy! Missy!' he was beginning passionately, but she checked him at once.

'Let well alone, Jack. I've spoken God's truth. I'm not going to say any more; only when you know all about me—as you may any day now—perhaps even to-day—don't say that I told nothing *but* lies. That's all. Now must I go back to the house, or will you?'

He glanced toward the river with unconscious significance. She shook her head and smiled. He hung his, and went away.

Once more Missy was alone among the river-timber; once more she flung herself down upon the short, dry grass, but this time upon her back, while her eyes and her ears were wide open.

A cherry-picker was frivalling in the branches immediately above her. From the moment it caught her eye, Missy seemed to take great interest in that cherry-picker's proceedings. She had wasted innumerable cartridges on these small birds, but that was in her blood-thirsty days, now of ancient history, and there had never been any ill-feeling between Missy and the cherry-pickers even then. One solitary native cat was all the fair game that she had slaughtered in her time. She now took to wondering why it was that these animals were never to be seen upon a tree in daytime; and as she wondered, her eyes hunted all visible forks and boughs; and as she hunted, a flock of small parrots came whirring like a flight of arrows, and called upon Missy's cherry-picker, and drove him from the branches overhead. But the parrots were a new interest, and well worth watching. They had red beaks and redder heads and tartan wings and emerald breasts. Missy had had shots at these also formerly; even now she shut her left eye and pretended that her right fore-finger was a gun, and felt certain of three fine fellows with one barrel had it really been a gun. Then at last she turned on her elbow towards the river, and opened her mouth to talk to herself. And after a long half-hour with nature this was all she had to say:

'If I did put myself in there, what use would it be? That beast would get a hold of Arabella then. But it'd be nice never to know what they said when they found out everything. What's more, I'd rather be in there, after this, than in any town. After this!'

She gave that mob of chattering parrots a very affectionate glance; also the dark green leaves with the dark blue sky behind

them ; also the brown, still river, hidden away from the sun. She had come to love them all, and the river would be a very good place for her indeed.

She muttered on : 'Then to think of John William ! Well, I never ! It would be best for him too if I snuffed out, one way or another ; and as for 'Bella, if that brute doesn't turn up soon, he may not turn up at all. But he said he'd keep me waiting. He's low enough down to do it, too.'

She looked behind her shuddering, as she had looked behind her many and many a time during the last few days. Instantly her eyes fell upon that at which one has a right to shudder. Within six feet of Missy a brown snake had stiffened itself from the ground with darting tongue and eyes like holes in a head full of fire. And Missy began to smile and hold out her hands to it.

'Come on,' she said. 'Come on and do your worst ! I wish you would. That'd be a way out without no blame to anybody—and just now they might be sorry. Come on, or I'll come to you. Ah, you wretch, you coward, you !'

She had got to her knees, and was actually making for the snake on all fours ; but it darted back into its hole like a streak of live seaweed ; and Missy then rose wearily to her feet, and stood looking around her once more, as though for the last time.

'What am I to do ?' she asked of river, trees, and sky. 'What am I to do ? I haven't the pluck to finish myself, nor yet to make a clean breast. I haven't any pluck at all. I might go back and do something that'd make the whole kit of 'em glad to get rid o' me. That's what I call a gaudy idea, but it would mean clearing out in a hurry. And I don't want to clear out—not yet. Not just yet ! So I'll slope back and see what's happening and how things are panning out ; and I'll go on sitting tight as long as I'm let.'

(To be continued.)

At the Sign of the Ship.

THE author of a little book for candidates in examinations writes to me complaining of certain strictures published in the May number of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE. As he says, I certainly do not care for the methods of modern examinations. The methods may be bad, yet his book may not be bad. Indeed, I do not suppose that the skeleton of history which he offered represents all the history which its readers are supposed to know. But my remarks bore on statements which I regarded as inadequate, or inaccurate, and that I may not misrepresent my correspondent I quote his defence in full. The topics may be rather grave for these pages, but fair play is a jewel, and justice must be done even if the *Ship* prove dull. My honourable correspondent, however, need not have written on both sides of his paper.

* * *

‘I. “Beginning with George II.,” to quote your words, “we have a ‘tip’ five lines long from Mr. Green. I might prefer, as characteristic of George II.—

The fire shall get both hat and wig
As often they've got a' that.”

Yes; but would examiners prefer it, as giving a better idea of George II.’s character than the five lines I have quoted? They are, “The temper of George II. was that of a drill sergeant who believed himself master of his realm, while he repeated the lessons he had learnt from his wife, Caroline of Anspach, and which his wife had learnt from the Minister (Walpole).”

‘In spite of your preference I confidently maintain that not only examiners but the majority of intelligent people would unhesitatingly decide in favour of my quotation.

‘II. “Later on we come to Captain Jenkins and his ear,

‘ which he said that the Spaniards had cut off with taunts at the English king.’ They must indeed have been cutting taunts.”

‘ No doubt the opportunity for a play on words was very tempting; but you seem to have forgotten that you have made it not at my expense, but at that of the celebrated historian, Mr. J. R. Green. Let me give you the extract. “ The ill-humour of the trading classes rose to madness in 1738, when a merchant captain, named Jenkins, told at the bar of the House of Commons the tale of his torture by the Spaniards, and produced an ear, which he said *they had cut off with taunts at the English king.*”

‘ III. As to Charles Edward being proclaimed James VIII., the error is obviously a clerical one, which escaped my notice in my hasty revision of the proof sheets, and could not possibly mislead the most ignorant schoolboy; for, as you aptly put it, how on earth could Charles Edward be James VIII.? Of course it was the old Pretender,¹ who died in 1766, that was proclaimed as James VIII.

‘ IV. Finally, you say, “ Charles did not ‘evade Cope’ . . . Cope evaded him, moving north and east from Corryarraick (*sic*) after the Prince had expected to dispute the crown of the causeway with him there.”

‘ True so far, for Cope refused to fight on a spot where to do so would have only been to court defeat. But it was Charles who availed himself of the opening afforded him, and so, *evading Cope*, pushed forward towards Edinburgh. In support of this contention I quote from (*a*) Ransome, (*B*) Green.

‘ (*a*) “ Sir John Cope had, on the first news of the Pretender’s approach, been ordered to march into the Highlands. This he did, and was on his way to Fort Augustus, when he learnt that the Highlanders were ready to bar his road at a place called the Devil’s Staircase, where the road in seventeen zigzags wound its way up the steep side of Corriearack. On learning this Cope turned aside for Inverness, thus leaving the road to Edinburgh open, and *of this mistake* the Prince took advantage at once.”

‘ (*B*) “ The Highlanders had got possession of this difficult pass (Corriearack), and intended to destroy Cope’s army while ascending the zigzags. Their disappointment was great when they found that he had turned aside at Dalwhinnie, and was in hasty march for Inverness. By this means he probably hoped to strengthen the loyal clans of the north, and to draw the Prince’s army in pursuit. *He, however, left the road towards the capital quite*

¹ (*Sic.*)

unguarded. *Charles at once pushed on*, and crossed the Badenoch mountains to Blair Athol, from whence the great road runs, without any obstacle, through the Pass of Killiecrankie into the plains of Perthshire."

"Trusting to your sense of justice to insert this short "apologia" in your "At the Sign of the Ship," I am &c.'

* * *

I. This point is a matter of taste. I think examiners would prefer—'tip' for 'tip'—a contemporary ballad to a modern historian's hackneyed phrase, but *de gustibus non est disputandum*.

II. I do not care a bawbee whether 'the celebrated historian, Mr. J. R. Green,' or whether my correspondent invented the exquisite phrase about 'cutting off Jenkins's ear with taunts,' and so on. If Jenkins himself used the words, they are interesting; if not, they are absurd.

III. My correspondent admits that Charles Edward could not, as he asserted, be proclaimed king as James VIII. This remark 'escaped notice in hasty revision.' Why should the revision have been hasty? Ill doth it become me to throw the first stone, but any schoolboy, I think, might be misled by the blunder. The same blunder occurs in a recent work of great weight and merit.

IV. I repeat that Charles was evaded by Cope, not Cope by Charles. Charles goes to meet Cope; Cope *non est inventus*. He marches away north; the Prince marches south, as had always been his intention. My acquaintance with the subject is not derived from Ransome or Green, but from the contemporary statements and letters. But Mr. Ransome says, 'Cope turned aside.' Exactly, he *did* turn aside, and so evaded Charles. Mr. Green uses the same phrase. It is the man who 'turns aside,' not he who holds on his course, that evades the other man, if language has any meaning at all. Mr. Green does not vary from the facts, though I may not prefer his sketch as a source in this portion of our history, nor, perhaps in any portion.

* * *

I am accused of making a blunder when I call the hill near Inveran station, where, or whereby, Montrose was defeated, 'the Hill of Wailing.' I have consulted Mr. John Ross, an admirable fisher and a charming companion. He translates the Gaelic as 'the Rock of Wailing,' and that is the local opinion. Gaelic

scholars give me five or six renderings: Rock of Moss, Rock of Mist, Rock of Fog, Rock of Little Kenneth, and a few others are mentioned. In this divergence of opinions one may prefer the most picturesque translation, while ready to admit that the odds are five to one against any given rendering.

* * *

In a recent discussion about Oriental jugglery Mr. Walter Pollock cited a case of the Rope Trick, as viewed by an Englishman. The rope was thrown up at night in a narrow court, and manifestly was fastened to an unseen bar. I confess that I thought this explanation weak, but, on consulting Ibn Batuta (1340), I revise my opinion. Batuta saw the trick at Hang-chaufu; but he saw it *at night*, and *in a court*. This has been neglected by enquirers. On the other hand he saw a boy ascend, saw the juggler climb after him, and the mutilated remains of the boy fell into the court, were put together, and were reanimated. The hypothesis of a bar, concealed by the night, does not apply to this hallucination. The Khazi Afkharuddin, a looker-on, said, 'Wallah, 'tis my opinion there has been neither going up nor coming down, neither marring nor mending; 'tis all hocus-pocus' (Yule's *Marco Polo*, i. 308, 309). Thus we may conceive that some hypnotic glamour was at work. The scene was China—not India—and they were Chinese who did the same trick before Edward Melton, at Batavia, about 1670. 'Never in my life was I so astonished,' says Melton. The jugglers who did the trick before the Emperor Jahangir were from Bengal. The flying cups and dishes mentioned by Marco Polo were exhibited, it seems, before Charles IX. of France; at least Colonel Yule thinks that Delrio, in his *Disquisitio Magica*, refers to that prince (pp. 34, 200): 'Silver goblets are moved by bounds from one end of a table to the other, without the use of a magnet or of any attachment.' The juggler was one Cesare Maltesio. Ibn Batuta saw the trick of sitting on empty air at a Mussulman court, and Valentyn mentions a friend of his who ran a long stick all about the juggler, but could find no support. 'Still, I could only say that I could not believe it, as a thing too manifestly contrary to reason.' Nevertheless, as Chaucer says—

I am sicker that there be sciences
By which men maken divers apparences.

A REMONSTRANCE.

There are thoughts that the mind cannot fathom,
 The mind of the animal male ;
 But woman abundantly hath them,
 And mostly her notions prevail.
 And why ladies read what they *do* read
 Is a thing that no man may explain,
 And if any one asks for a true rede
 He asketh in vain.

Ah, why is each 'passing depression'
 Of stories that gloomily bore
 Received as the subtle expression
 Of almost unspeakable lore ?
 In the dreary, the grubby, the grimy,
 Say, why do our women delight,
 And wherefore so constantly ply me
 With *Ships in the Night* ?

Dear ladies, in vain you approach us,
 With Harradens, Hobbeses, and Grands ;
 For, alas ! though you offer to coach us,
 Yet the soul of no man understands
 Why the grubby is always the moral,
 Why the nasty's preferred to the nice,
 While you keep up a secular quarrel
 With a gay little vice ;

Yes, a vice with her lips full of laughter,
 A vice with a rose in her hair,
 You condemn, in the present and after,
 To darkness of utter despair :
 But a sin, if no rapture redeem it,
 But a passion that's pale and played out,
 Or in surgical hands—you esteem it
 Worth scribbling about !

What is sauce for the goose, for the gander
 Is sauce, ye inconsequent fair !
 It is better to laugh than to maunder,
 And better is mirth than despair ;

And though Life's not all beer and all skittles,
Yet the sun, on occasion, can shine,
And, *mon Dieu*, he's a fool who belittles
This cosmos of thine.

There are cakes, there is ale—ay, and ginger
Shall be hot in the mouth, as of old :
And a villain, with cloak and with whinger,
And a hero, in armour of gold,
And a maid with a face like a lily,
With a heart that is stainless and gay,
Make a tale worth a world of the silly
Sad trash of to-day !

* * *

Perhaps because some critic ('A.T.Q.C.' in fact) called the book 'inevitable' I have avoided *Esther Waters*, by Mr. George Moore. Seductions of servant girls by footmen may be not uncommon ; indeed, the *Oaristys* of Theocritus is not unread in most ranks of life. But this particular *Oaristys* sounds unidyllic, and I have also no curiosity about the hospitals of maternity which are described. The vileness of our vile bodies is always with us, and, in literature, one would gladly escape from the burden. However, each man to his taste. The novel, I understand, contains powerful discourses against betting on the turf. The extreme prevalence of that sordid folly proves two things. First, the poor very naturally want to escape from strikes, labour, and weariness into a paradise of hope. Gambling offers them 'the key of the happy golden land,' and sends the gleam of romance flitting before them, the rainbow with the buried treasure at its feet. Therefore the poor bet, and with infinitely more excuse than the rich. The habit is morally and financially ruinous, but if the world is to be cured of betting it will not be by the most powerful tracts, sermons, or moral novels appealing to the sentiments. People can only be mended by reason when instructed that the odds against a success worth winning are mathematically incalculable. This plain fact will convince the reasonable, but, unluckily, the reasonable are a very small minority, and perhaps are convinced already. The opium-eater knows the end of opium-eating, and the sporting footman, if he reflects, knows the end of backing horses ; but the magical gleam is too much for them, is too much for all of us, for every mortal thinks that he himself is

the exception to the general rules. He (or she) can flirt without singeing of wings ; can bet, and pull up in time ; can write verses and not become a minor poet, and so forth in all walks of life. Perhaps the socialist may say that property, among other evils, causes gambling. Men hope to increase their possessions, so they bet. But the Red Indian is a practical communist : he gives all he has away at a moment's notice—for example, on a death in his family. He holds so lightly to property that he is next door to having none. Yet of all gamblers he is the most desperate. In truth, men do not so much want to amass gain, by gambling, as to enjoy the exciting fluctuations of luck. If property were abolished to-morrow, I believe that men would invent a shell currency, like the Papuans, and gamble for that.

* * *

A queer place to find a fishing story is *Histoire des Avanturiers* (Paris, 1688), yet here is a fine specimen. 'One day,' says our author, 'when I was fishing with a little line and a hook, I felt a nibble ; I struck, met no resistance, and soon after attempted to make a fresh cast, but could not get my line out of the water. I thought I was fast on a rock, as often happens, but, looking closer, found a monstrous fish, which did not stir at all, on the surface of the water. The slightest struggle on his part would have broken me. I called to my friends, who rove a cord about the fish, and we landed him. He was four feet long, two feet across, and weighed a hundred and twenty pounds. Many persons who had lived for twenty-five years in that country assured us that they had never seen a fish like him,' which, indeed, one can readily believe. This creature must have been, as Cotton says of the grayling, 'the deadeast-hearted fish that swims.'

* * *

The *Spectator* has been giving examples of childish misconceptions, mainly in sacred matter. I can add an example of my own. In a Scottish version of the psalms occurs the line—

And for His sheep He doth us take.

For long I believed this to be—

For His sheep He doth a steak,

as one had heard of 'doing a chop' for a person in a hurry. It did not seem absurd, then, that beef steaks should be cooked for

sheep. There is another tale of a little boy who, being taken to the seaside for the first time, asked, 'Where are the tinnamies?' He had heard of 'the sea, and all that in him is,' and 'tinnamies' had become concrete beings of some sort in his imagination.

* * *

Every lover of old chapbooks knows *The Laird o' Coul's Ghost*. A copy of it was given to me some time ago by Mr. William Black; there is also an edition published by Mr. Elliot Stock, in 1892, 'from the original MS. in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Gordon, St. Andrew's, Glasgow.' This MS. was found, in 1788, among the papers of Hamilton of Dalzell; the earliest printed edition is said to be of 1750. The writer of the preface, J. F. S. G. (Dr. Gordon?), says that Mr. Ogilvie, author of the MS., died soon after the conference with the ghost. From the nature of the statements in the chapbooks I have always taken it to be a kind of imaginative satire by Mr. Ogilvie, or Ogilby, 'minister at Haddington Presbytery,' says Wodrow. He was minister of Innerwick, near Dunbar. To be brief, Coul had been haunting the roads and frightening people. Ogilvie had expressed readiness to meet him, and the ghost, on horseback, appeared to him on February 3, 1722, near Dunbar; also on March 5, when he said that his horse was the ghost of his tenant Andrew Johnstoun! He then gave a 'spiritualistic' and not an orthodox account of the state of the dead. On April 9 there was another meeting, Coul asking Ogilvie to redress some injustices done by him in his life days. This request he repeated on the following day, but Ogilvie declined to go 'on an April errand' without Coul's written commission, which he declared that he was unable to give. There the pamphlet ends, and one naturally takes it either for a forgery or for a *bourde*, or jest, by Mr. Ogilvie.

* * *

This curious affair, however, is not yet ended; it has some corroborative testimony. Wodrow, writing in 1729 (in his *Analecta*, iv. 59), asserts that he first heard the tale in 1724, or 1725, in letters from 'Mr. Mek.' Coul had appeared to the servant of a doctor at Dumfries; Ogilvie, being told the story, expressed his desire to meet Coul, and they afterwards had several interviews. Ogilvie died in the year when Wodrow was writing—1729—and among his papers was found a bundle of MSS. marked, 'Not to be opened till after my decease, and that in the presence

of two neighbouring ministers.' Mr. Paton, of Haddington, and another clergyman, therefore, opened the papers ; they contained a signed account of interviews with Coul ; and, adds Wodrow, 'I am promised a sight of them.' It is probable, therefore, that the chapbook does contain Ogilvie's remarks, and it is certain that Ogilvie did leave a written statement. But whether he really was a visionary, or whether he played a solemn, funereal, posthumous practical joke, is a question which, for want of information about Mr. Ogilvie's character, we must leave undecided. The papers, according to Mrs. Hogg, daughter of Mr. Ogilvie, were in her father's handwriting. So says the editor of Mr. Stock's edition of 1892. There remains the alternative that a joke was played on Ogilvie by some one well acquainted with Coul, his country, and his neighbours. This was Ogilvie's original idea, but, striking at the supposed jester with his cane, to mark him, the cane encountered no resistance. So there we leave Coul's ghost, noting that, in spite of Mrs. Hogg and the original manuscript, there may conceivably have been a forgery, based on the rumours quoted by Wodrow.

A. LANG.

ONLY GENUINE

1

1

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Colds,
Asthma,
Bronchitis.**

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE. — Dr. J. C. BROWNE (late Army Medical Staff) DISCOVERED & REINVENTED the SOLE INVENTOR, Dr. Browne is the SOLE INVENTOR, and, as the composition of Chlorodyne cannot possibly be discovered by Analysis (organic substances defying elimination), and since the formula has never been published, it is evident that any statement to the effect that a compound is identical with Dr. Browne's Chlorodyne must be false.

This Caution is necessary, as many persons deceive purchasers by false representations.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE. — Vice Chancellor Sir W. PAGE STATED publicly in Court that Dr. J. COLLIS BROWNE was the SOLE INVENTOR of CHLORODYNE and that the whole story of the defendant Haggard was deliberately untrue, and he regretted to say it had been sworn to. — See *The Times*, July 13th, 1864.

DIARRHOEA, DYSENTERY, GENERAL BOARD OF HEALTH, London, REPORT that it ACTS as a CHARM, one dose generally sufficient. DR. GIBSON, Army Medical Staff, CALCUTTA, in a DEPRESSIVE COMPLETELY CURED ME of DIARRHOEA." From SYMES & CO., Pharmaceutical Chemists, Simla. Jan. 5, 1860.

To J. T. DAVENPORT, London.

DEAR SIR.—We congratulate you upon the widespread reputation this justly-esteemed medicine has earned for itself all over the East. As a remedy of general utility, we much question whether a better is imported, and we shall be glad to hear of its finding a place in every Anglo-Indian home. The old brands of Indian Balsams are now relegated to the native bazaars, and, judging from their sale, we fancy their sojourn there will be but evanescent. We could multiply instances *ad infinitum* of the extraordinary efficacy of DR. COLLIS BROWNE'S CHLORODYNE in Diarrhoea and Dysentery, Spasms, Cramps, Neuralgia and the Vomiting of Pregnancy, and as a general sedative that have occurred under our personal observation during many years. In Cholera Diarrhoea, and even in the more terrible forms of Cholera itself, we have witnessed its surprisingly controlling power.

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